Empire Made
An Historical Survey of the English Universities and of the Processes Globalisation

Duck, Allen George

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An Historical Survey of the English Universities and of the Processes Globalisation

by
Allen George Duck

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Abstract

This thesis argues that English higher education has, for several centuries, progressed in a loose confederation with the spread of the economic and culturally homogenising phenomenon we now recognise as globalisation. The study comprises an historical survey that maps the evolution of the universities and their international influence. This interaction becomes more identifiable toward the end of the eighteenth century, after the independence of the American colonies when the British consolidated their empire elsewhere. The thesis argues that the universities, in their role as educators of the elite for the world's largest empire, shaped the politics and the progress that contributed to modern globalisation. English institutions of higher education crafted their own attitudes and philosophy into a formula that was adopted, adapted and integrated into a worldwide 'knowledge society'.

This investigation spans two centuries, the long nineteenth and the short twentieth. The long nineteenth century is considered to have begun in 1789 with the French revolution and the publication of the 'Rights of Man' and to have finished in 1914 with the start of the Great War, which wrecked the existent globalised network. The short twentieth century starts with the conflict of 1914 and finishes in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet empire and communism in Eastern Europe. It is not my intention to construct a complete history of this period but, rather, to trace the steady progress of the technological and socio-economic conditions that have created an ever shrinking world. This 'time-space convergence' is central to globalisation theory and will be juxtaposed with the equally complex cultural, economic and often political route of English higher education from an exclusive elite system to massification.

Introduction

This thesis argues that for several centuries the economic and cultural processes of globalisation and English higher education have advanced in a loose confederation. From the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain employed both ‘gunboat diplomacy’ and ‘colonial dominance’ to advance a policy of international commercial expansion that would develop into an overseas empire (Nayyar, 2006, p139). While Britain’s aristocractic gentry were happy to share in the profits from this overseas trade they preferred to leave the ‘everyday running of the Empire’ to a new strata of middle class university educated administrators (Morris, 1979, p219). This greatly increased graduate opportunities and prompted institutions of higher education to consciously produce ‘an identifiable elite’ who shared similar ‘values and codes of honour’ and were suited ‘for public service and the running of an Empire’ (McCulloch, 1991, p15). As Britain’s overseas possessions expanded, its universities became ever more ‘imperialised’ by their efforts to meet the demand for suitable graduates (Rubinstein, 1994, p104). By the end of the nineteenth century the interconnectedness of Britain’s international trade had become recognisable as the foundation of ‘modern globalisation’ (Went, 2002, p10); equally the Oxbridge ethos of 'education for leadership' had become widely accepted as ‘a specifically English tradition’ (McCulloch, 1991, p16).

Thus, the universities, which have ‘always figured in the global environment’ (Altbach, 2004, p4) were among the earliest of the establishment institutions to create a niche in the ‘the long history’ of globalisation (Scholte, 2005, p19). The foundations of Britain’s imperial expansion had been established in the eighteenth century by the free market theories of philosophical ‘economists’ like Adam Smith and David Ricardo (Jones, 2003). Their innovative views gained political credibility and came to provide the basis of a lobby for the reduction of protectionist import and export tariffs (Cain, 1999, p1). The 1846 abolition of the restrictive Corn Laws removed the last ‘serious opposition’ to the British government’s unilateral declaration of free trade (Trevelyan, 1922, p276) and enabled the international release of the ‘forces of capitalism’ (Das, 2009, p6).

These were the events that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would create the demand for increasing numbers of university educated colonial officers and civil servants (Hoppen, 1998, p112).

Ferguson argues that their aptitude for organisation and fair-play did much to promote ‘Western norms of law, order and governance around the world’ (Ferguson, 2003, pxxii). Britain’s combination of public school and ancient university has long been recognised as a 'nursery of power' (Anderson, 2006, p137). For example, between 1868 and 1955 only one cabinet minister who had attended a public school did not also study at Oxford or Cambridge university (Guttsman, 1963, p156). In the mid nineteeneth century university graduates whose public school had taught them the behavior and manners of the 'English gentleman' (Wiener, 1992, p18) considered a foreign or colonial office posting to be ‘one of the plum prizes’ (Morris, 1979, p185). These liberally educated civil servants were sent to the far-flung outposts of empire where they demonstrated the Oxbridge ideals of ‘balance and detachment’ levened with a little ‘knightly gentleness and honour’ (Barnett, 1987, p221). For Britain's 'classically trained administrative elite' much of the appeal of imperial governorship lay in the opportunity to reproduce the sense of civic order described in 'Plato's Republic'. The prospect of a ‘just society’ overseen by Oxbridge graduates as Plato's stable and incorruptible 'guardians' proved a ‘persuasive ideal for Britain's bureaucratic rulers overseas' (Weir & Beetham, 1999, p35).

At its Victorian peak the British Empire could flaunt its ‘red-bespattered’ maps (Porter, 2004, p46) and the claim to have a quarter of the world’s landmass was ‘under its banner’ (Shridharani, 1942, p49). When British statesmen proclaimed their empire to be a free trade zone they anticipated the creation of an ‘endless era of peace and prosperity’ (Davies, 2005, p56). The declaration of free trade was intended to have global consequences, it was the decision of men intent on a single world market, a ‘Greater Britain’, knitted together by networks of railways and steamships and connected by telegraph (Egerton, 1903, p5). Ferguson identifies this process of imposing British standards and methods on a large section of the world’s population as ‘Anglobalization’ (Ferguson, 2003, pxxiv). This British territorial expansion went beyond its previously conceived limits and is now considered to be globalisation’s ‘belle époque’ (Hirst, 1997, p409). ‘The British Empire was the nearest thing there has ever been to a world government’ (Ferguson, 2003, pxxvi). These were the circumstances under which English higher education became a conduit, a globalising agency that broadcast British socio-cultural ideals and methods to the rest of the world.

The process of globalisation has been with us for centuries, although the actual word ‘globalisation’ was not applied to the worldwide expansion of trade, investment and cultural homogenisation until the 1960’s (Guillén, 2001, p5). Since then ‘globalisation’ has achieved ‘terminological stardom’ (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p1). It has become a ‘favourite catchphrase’ (Robertson, 2003, p3) and a publishing industry ‘buzzword’ (Chanda, 2007, p2), which has been attached to almost every field of human endeavor (Jeffery, 2002). The only reliable ‘consensus about globalisation is that it is contested’ both in its process and its origins (Scholte, 2005, p46). Globalisation is surrounded by an ‘annoying lack of historical specificity’ (Eley, 2007, p159). However, there much historical evidence to indicate that globalisation is more than a ‘twentieth-century phenomenon’ (Hall, 2008, p773) and Macgillivray argues that researchers should ‘focus in’ on this evidence (Macgillivray, 2006, p17). The assumption of modernity risks missing the ‘historical and social depths’ of a globalising tendency that as a ‘human dynamic has always been with us’ (Robertson, 2003, p4). Ancient trading patterns provide evidence for 'archaic globalization' (Macgillivray, 2006, p15) that reaches back thousands of years to the ‘first ships and land caravans’ (Moore & Lewis, 2009, p1). These trends are discernable in networks of international trade such as the Silk Road (Scholte, 2005; Tabari, 2006). Trade goods, knowledge and news passed along these routes, and eventually launched an age of ‘interoceanic travel’ that generated a series of globalisation cycles that ‘transformed entire societies across the globe’ (Coatsworth, 2004, p38).

Globalisation may have ‘evolved out of the past’ but any account of that past cannot be a conventional history (Bell, 2003, p813). While kings, queens, presidents and wars leave reliable footprints, globalisation is a less easily identifiable network of ‘trends, patterns and processes’ (Stearns, 2010, p12). It is precisely because these networks are susceptible to ‘shifting perceptions of time and space’ that ‘globalization scholars assign particular significance to historical analysis’ (Steger, 2003, p8). This impression of a ‘time-space convergence’ is central to ‘mainstream’ globalisation theory. The steady progress of technology and integrated socio-economic conditions bind nation states together while innovation in transport and communications provide an increased efficiency that creates the view of an ever ‘shrinking world’ (Sheppard, 2002, p309).

Globalisation is not a ‘phenomenon without a past’ (Rothschild, 1999, p106) and I suggest that within that past a synergy existed between the British Empire, globalisation and existent forms of English higher education. Globalisation progresses in ‘jerky’ and uneven space-time contractions, thus in this thesis I intend to illustrate that relationship through a series of ‘critical planet shrinking moments’ (Macgillivray, 2006, p17). Thompson states that globalisation has been ‘underway for centuries’ and that any survey which examines only its ‘most recent tail end’ would be incomplete (Thompson, 2000, p3). Therefore, I start my thesis with a contextual setting, which is a brief account of relevant events that precede my more detailed investigation. Historical ‘turning points’ are susceptible to many spheres of influence and cannot be relied upon to occur with the ‘mechanical regularity’ that would place them within the limits of the calendar (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p27). Historians overcome this by implementing the notion of the ‘long and short century’, a variable period that can be adjusted to allow an event to be completed within an allotted timeframe (Clark, 1998, p10).

Steger argues that globalisation studies cut across ‘traditional disciplinary boundaries’ and require that the researcher adopt an approach, which is broad enough to ‘behold the big picture’ (Steger, 2006, p64). Therefore my investigation will span two centuries, the long nineteenth and the short twentieth. The long nineteenth century is considered to begin in 1789 with the French revolution and the publication of the ‘Rights of Man’ (Kurth, 1995, p3) and to finish in 1914 with the start of the Great War which wrecked the existent globalised network and dashed the hopes of free market liberals (Davies, 2005, p57). The short twentieth century starts with the conflict of 1914 and finishes in 1989 with the ‘collapse of communism in Eastern Europe’ (Kurth, 1995, p3; Hobsbawm, 1994, p56). The two hundred year span from 1789 to 1989 does conveniently add up to two numerical centuries (Kurth, 1995, p3). However, it is not my intention to construct a complete history of this period but to trace the interconnections and ‘lines of rupture' that are caused by, or strongly influenced by international and domestic commercial and political action and then to observe their 'time and space’ consequences for higher education (Bell, 2003, p814). I have selected those events that mark the complex cultural, economic and often political route of English higher education as it moves from an exclusive elite system to one of massification (Scott, 1995, p15).

Universities have been among the ‘keenest participants in the surge of globalisation’ (Mroz, 2008) and higher education in general is now regarded as ‘an important global phenomenon’ whose participants are often ‘more worldly' than those involved in other pursuits (Keane, 2003, p130). Throughout history the incidents considered to be milestones in the evolution and expansion of globalisation similarly mark the evolution and expansion of universities and higher education. There is substantial evidence that China and the Islamic countries were the earliest to engage in the sort of international commercial and cultural exchanges that can be identified as globalisation (Macgillivray, 2006, p15) but my thesis will be necessarily Anglocentric as it deals largely with British institutions. Equally, although forms of higher education are known to have existed from the fourth century at Alexandria, Athens, Constantinople, and Antioch (Durant, 1950, p121) my references to the ‘universities’ and to ‘higher education’ will be intended to indicate the Western European model.

Modern globalisation is widely perceived as an Americanising process but before ‘Pax Americana’ came ‘Pax Britannica’ (Nayyar, 2006, p146). Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Britain was the ‘greatest power in the world’ (Black, 2005, p353), its empire was managed ‘very largely by graduates of the ancient universities’ (Morris, 1979, p187). They prepresented an ‘imperial service’ of ‘pre-eminently upper middle class’ district commissioners, colonial civil servants and regional officials (Morris, 1979, p219) whose shared educational background was an ‘essential factor’ in maintaining the international ‘web of government’ (Morris, 1979, p188). The English universities were encouraged to become ‘outward-looking’ to strengthen their ‘cross-border chains and loops’ until they themselves became a vital factor in the ‘vigorous global debate about globalisation’ (Keane, 2003, p130).

The evidence, which I believe supports my thesis of a loose confederation between the English universities and the historical progress globalisation, will be presented as chronologically as overlapping and simultaneous events will allow.

Contextual setting

The process of globalisation is sometimes identified as a 'late twentieth-century phenomenon' which 'of course, it is not' (Hall, 2008, p773). The two hundred year period which I intend to examine was shaped by centuries of previous development. This brief contextual setting introduces many of the elements that have contributed to the international diffusion of ideas that mark the progress of economic and cultural globalisation (Momin, 2007).

In 1267 the Polo brothers, merchant adventurers from Venice, set out to travel the Silk Road all the way to the Chinese imperial city of Changan (Marshall, 1998, p19). The Silk Road, described by Tabari as an early 'channel for globalization', was the longest trade route of the ancient world (Tabari, 2006). It was a chain of over-lapping communities peopled by dealers and brokers who also disseminated news, ideas and beliefs (Gladney, 1999, pp440-441). When the Polo brothers eventually returned home Marco was assisted by a writer in assembling an account of his travels. Published in 1300, 'The Travels of Marco Polo' was instrumental in bringing the potential for lucrative trade with China to international attention (Marshall, 1998, p19). The book is identified by Legrain as a promoter of early economic globalisation (Legrain, 2002, p82).

Polo's book is still acclaimed as one of the 'great records of geographic exploration' (Martin & Preston, 1993, p46). Although when it appeared each volume had to be hand written there were professional copists who catered for the secular tastes of wealthy bibliophiles (Rietbergen, 1998, p185). Religious and academic manuscripts were copied and often illuminated by monks whose monasteries maintained significant book collections (Cubberley, 1920, p135). During Europe's Middle or Dark Ages, the 'lamp of learning' was kept alight by monasteries intent upon providing educated church management (Roberts, 1947, p7). But an increasingly complex and secular society created a demand for educated administrators as well as priests (Scott, 2006, p6). The monasteries with their valuable libraries were best positioned to teach and by 1088 a group of monks in Bologna were teaching in an institution which they regarded as a university (Haskins, 1923, p10; Rietbergen, 1998, p95).

In the twelfth century France followed suit and transformed an 'outgrowth' of the cathedral school of Notre-Dame into the University of Paris (Haskins, 1923, p22). The universities of Bologna and Paris became intellectual nuclei and attracted students from all over Europe (Kibre, 1948, pix). English students who had studied at the University of Paris founded a university of their own at Oxford, a later group moved on to do the same at Cambridge (Roberts, 1947, p8). By the beginning of the fifteenth century there were approximately ‘eighty universities in Europe’ (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2011, p304).

Academic thinking in Western Europe was greatly enriched by Jewish and Muslim scholars who slowly migrated into the Iberian Peninsula after its eigth century Moorish invasion (Cox, 2001, p132). With them came the knowledge of the Islamic world, which included numerous learned texts gathered from the libraries of ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt and which had been preserved for centuries (Murphy, 2001, p118). Muslim scholars allowed their European counterparts access to what must be considered the ‘entire corpus' of scientific and philosophical works available at that time (Vernet, 1991). Western Europe was introduced to the writing of Greek philosophers and physicians (Rait, 1912, p6), that contributed greatly to the ‘globalisation of science and philosophy’ (Momin, 2007).

This ‘new’ knowledge brought the requirement for a different pedagogical approach to thirteenth century university education (Scott, 2006, p8). Among rediscovered Greek works were examples of Aristotle’s philosophical thinking, where resolutions were arrived at by a process of deductive reasoning rather than by faith (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2011, p305). Christian intellectuals were attracted by this method of inquiry but the church had difficulty in accepting it. Aristotle was no Christian (Marenbon, 2005). Thomas Aquinas, mid thirteenth century philosophical thinker, found enough common ground to combine Aristotle’s ‘natural law’ with God, the ‘creator of nature’ (Goldman, 2007, p109). The resulting ‘synthesis of truth’ (Harrison, 1953, p3) was labelled ‘Scholasticism’; a process that successfully blended theology with philosophy by accepting the authority of the Church in matters of faith and the authority of Aristotle in everything else (Roberts, 1947, p14; Woodhead, 2004, p62). Scholasticism became the ‘state-of-the-art teaching method’ of the medieval European university (Scott, 2006, p7).

While much of fourteenth century Europe was mired in political and territorial conflict, cities of Northern Italy enjoyed a ‘relative peace’ that was maintained by the powerfully aggressive merchant families who dominated them (Smith & Smith, 1994, p94). Such families demonstrated their escalating social status with expensive municipal gifts and elaborate artworks (Smith & Smith, 1994, p95). This self-aggrandising philanthropy initiated a creative ‘Renaissance’, a rebirth of intellectual pursuits that truly blossomed after 1440 with the arrival of Byzantine scholars fleeing the advance of the Ottoman Turks on Constantinople (Cox, 2001, p132). These scholars settled in the sophisticated cities of Northern Italy, bringing with them entire libraries, the accumulated knowledge of the Byzantine Empire. The philosophy of the Renaissance spread out across the known world (Cox, 2001, pp132-133) and helped to reduce some the cultural restrictions imposed by the religious leaders of the Dark Ages (Cowen, 2002 p81).

Renaissance intellectuals were critical of scholasticism. Almost two centuries of repetitive teaching had reduced the ‘precision’ of Aristotle’s deductive reasoning to a thoughtless ritual (Green, 1952, p22). The wisdom of the ancients was highly revered but so rarely examined that its very practice was impeding the progress of scholarship (Harrison, 1953, p3). Italy’s Renaissance educationists searched the Byzantine texts for evidence that would support their alternative view (Smith & Smith, 1994, p95). They found it in the work by ancient Roman philosopher Marcus Cicero. It the transcript of a speech titled ‘Studia Humanitatis’, Cicero proposed that the ‘cultural’ basis of individual freedom and responsible action could be approached through process of critically analysing classical writings rather than merely reading and accepting them (Mann, 2004, p1).

The advocates of this ‘humanist’ approach believed that a critical examination of the ancient philosophies would lead students to a better understanding of their own circumstances (Brotton, 2006, p39). ‘Humanism’ provided a ‘blueprint’ (Brotton, 2006, p42) for the ‘new progamme of education’ (Proctor, 1998, p14), which was embraced by those Italian intellectuals who had ‘shifted away’ from scholasticism (Smith & Smith, 1994, p95). The 'eternal truths' that were to be discovered through a critical assessment of the ancient philosophers was considered an ideal basis from which ‘to govern society’ (Smith & Smith, 1994, p95).

Humanistic studies were non-vocational but still 'highly marketable'; its students were considered 'civilised' and better able to solve 'moral and ethical problems'. These were the skills required for a bureaucratic or administrative career (Brotton, 2006, p40). Although Humanism flourished throughout Europe, it initially did so outside of the 'university walls' (Durant, 1957, p283). Some philosophical elements of humanism were adopted, but most universities were loath to discard scholasticism (Grendler, 2004a). England's two ancient universities, Oxford and Cambridge, maintained scholastic practice until well into the nineteenth century (Harrison, 1953, p22). Catholic scholars had toiled for years to reconcile ancient texts with the scriptures and while much Aristotelian philosophy had been 'approved' other 'pagan' sources were 'off limits' (Cox, 2001, p131).

Advancing technology played a significant part in the globalisation of knowledge. Fifteenth century Renaissance Humanism owes much of its success as a widespread intellectual movement to the invention of mechanical printing (Brotton, 2006, p41). The process of printing text by hand using woodcuts had long been practiced in China, where the world's oldest known 'book', a sixteen-foot long Buddhist scroll was printed in the ninth century (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2011, p256). In fifteenth century Europe, Johannes Gutenberg's printing machine adapted the operating principle of the screw-type wine press and incorporated his own design of movable metal type (Bellis, 1997). By 1455, when he published his 'Gutenberg Bible', the process had become so efficient that it rapidly spawned a printing industry. Within ten years there was at least one Gutenberg printing press operating in every European country (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, p106).

The mechanisation of printing provided a relatively inexpensive method of mass producing images and writing that was to have 'global consequences' (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p46). The successful publication of religious works was closely followed by descriptions of voyages, narratives of exotic travel and atlases. These provided marine navigation and topographical information previously available only by word of mouth or hand drawn charts (Scammell, 2004, p181). For example, such wider availability enabled Christopher Columbus, a ship's navigator, to purchase his own copy of 'The Travels of Marco Polo' which he then 'heavily annoted' (Rosenberg, 2007).

Columbus had calculated that East Asia must lay about three thousand miles west of Europe's Atlantic Coast (Marshall, 1998, p19). In October 1492 he sailed westward until he reached the islands that would later become known as the Bahamas. It was a pivotal event in the progress of globalisation (Fragoso, 2007, p1).
This transatlantic voyage opened a new era of western European maritime achievements; mainland America landings were made, the Cape of Good Hope was rounded and the earth circumnavigated (Guillén, 2001, p5). A literal 'new world' of previously unknown sea routes, supported a ‘determined European expansionism’ (Orser, 2002, p252). The voyage of Columbus was a ’landmark in the history of globalization’ (Chanda, 2007a, p1); it opened up the Atlantic trade routes and market so vast that it effectively ended the Mediterranean epoch (Durant, 1957, p331).

At the beginning of the sixteenth century Flemish cartographer, Gerhard Mercator adapted ancient knowledge to produce a method of rendering the whole of the earth’s known spherical surface as a flat chart (Scammell, 2004, p181). This new view of the world avoided the mathematical flaws of previous charts and became a vital navigational aid (Macgillivray, 2006, p46). But Mercator's ‘projection’ produced a distortion, the countries furthest from the equator appeared larger than they actually were, while those near the equator such as Africa and India appeared smaller (Goody, 2006, p20). Goody argues that Mercator's ‘projection’ was popular with Europe’s politicians because its ‘distortion of space’ produced a worldview in which their continent appeared more prominent (Goody, 2006, p21). Toward the end of the sixteenth century printed maps and atlases were creating a ‘global consciousness’; most people were aware of the earth as a planet spinning in space (Scholte, 1999, p14). For example, William Shakespeare was sufficiently confident of this understanding that he has Puck, a character in ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’ boast that he could ‘put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes' (Shakespeare, 2011, p91).

The prospect of world travel spurred the efforts of European adventurers in the Americas and the East, these explorations often revealed pagan cultures who pursued Godless lives with ‘apparent impunity’ (Durant, 1957, p23). Such discoveries undermined Catholic claims of a universal church and doctrinal enquiries were quietly raised throughout Europe (Butts, 1955, p194).

In 1517, Martin Luther, an ‘unpublished professor’ at the German University of Wittenberg expressed his doubts about Rome’s self-awarded status as the highest spiritual authority (Wilson, 2007, p35). He taught that Christian salvation came through faith in God not the trappings and rituals of the established church (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, p162). According to Luther, anyone who could read a bible could minister his or her own religious needs without the assistance of any organised system of worship (Wilson, 2007, p35). Enterprising printers provided the bibles as well as publishing and distributing Martin Luther’s ideas so widely that he became a ‘well-known and controversial public figure’ (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, p163).

Luther’s views so incensed Henry VIII of England that he felt obliged to defend the Catholic cause; he published a rebuke of Luther’s reform plans (Edel, 1987, p8). When in 1533 Henry wanted a divorce because his wife could not produce a male heir he might have expected a favourable response. He was mistaken; the Pope refused (Scott, 2006, p10). Henry was furious, his wife-in-waiting was very shortly to give birth. He took it on his own authority to divorce his first wife and promptly marry his second (Thurston, 1910, p1). The Pope immediately declared the English king excommunicated. Henry retaliated by removing England from the Catholic faith and founding a new national church of which he would be supreme head (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, p164).

However, England’s monasteries and aristocratic Catholic families were slow to comply with directives from Henry’s new national church and they railed against demands that all links with Rome should be severed (Kelly, 1977, p3). Moves to prevent such reluctance developing into a ‘threatening linkage’ between English Catholics and the pope (Kelly, 1977, p5) began in 1538 when Henry starting closing down ‘corrupt’ monasteries (Kelly, 1977, p6). The monastic universities of Oxford and Cambridge had been among the first to deny Rome and recognise the authority of the crown, this allowed them to claim a semi-secular status that provided immunity from Henry’s actions (Curtis, 1959, p23). Monastic wealth and lands continued to be seized in a steady, dogmatic process that after four years had largely dismantled the English monastic system (Kelly, 1977, p6).

This dissolution was met with a vengeful papal edict that made Henry the ‘common enemy of Catholic Europe’ (Wood, 1918, p8). The ships of the Catholic countries were given ‘full Papal sanction’ to attack any English ship they met (Wood, 1918, p14).

With Henry ‘menaced’ by the Catholic powers he stepped up the ambitious shipbuilding programme he had started at the beginning of his reign (Wood, 1918, p8). Much monastic ‘plunder’ was channeled into superior shipping, dockyards and coastal fortifications (Tucker, 1920, 337). Henry died in 1549 leaving a country that was on its way to becoming the world’s ‘chief naval power’ (Griffiths, 1952 p48). One of Henry’s major achievements was the creation of the Royal Navy (Bush, 1968, p53) and the executive office of the Admiralty (Wood, 1918, p15). The eventual dominance of maritime commerce by the Royal Navy and the British merchant fleet would generate capital for industrialisation and accelerate the globalisation process (Raudzens, 1999, p170).

As international trading increased so did the spread of the commercial practice known as ‘mercantilism’ (Dilorenzo, 2000, p25). Most Western European mercantilist systems revolved around just two major tenets. The first was the belief that the amount of trade in the world was ‘relatively fixed’ (Marshall, 1999, p19) and the second was that the purpose of trade was to accumulate gold and silver (Hoar, 2003, p33). If, as frequently happened, aggressive trading turned to genuine conflict; the bullion would be on hand to fund the war (Smith, 1937, p399). Johnson defines a merchant as ‘one who trafficks to remote countries’ (Johnson, 1775), but while away trafficking the merchants wanted their goods and factories to be protected by a strong nation state (Warlow et al, 2007, p68). As the strength of the nation was measured by its precious metal holdings (Warlow et al, 2007, p69) the exportation of gold and silver was prohibited (Warlow et al, 2007, p70); the expenditure of bullion was justified if it bought raw materials for manufactures that could be re-exported for a profit (Smith, 1937, p400). The export of manufactures and the import of materials were expected to maintain the gold and silver equilibrium in the short term and increase it in the long term; this was known as the balance of trade (Marshall, 1999, p20).

The spirit of mercantilism was to thrive throughout the reign of Elizabeth, ‘Henry VIII’s last surviving child’ (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, p186). Soon after she had been crowned in 1558 Elizabeth I pointedly declared her country and her church to be steadfastly Protestant. The Pope countered with excommunication (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, pp186-8). But her church was not of a single mind; a Protestant split had produced two major groups (Foster, 2006, p26). Elizabeth sought a solution and offered the two doctrines a settlement of uneasy alliance.

The Calvinist Protestants, known as 'Puritans' after their preference for a no-frills religion of pure biblical truth, accepted Elizabeth's settlement as an unofficial royal sanction. Those who rather enjoyed the frills were accommodated separately within the more ritualistic 'crypto-Catholicism' of Jacobus Arminius of the Dutch reform church (Ogg, 1956, p24). Oxbridge theologians had prepared the way for Arminius; the universities had significant influence over religious matters and were the 'principal source' of enthusiasm for the movement (Curtis, 1959, p226).

Spain's king Philip II wanted England's throne as much as he wanted to prevent Elizabeth's 'pirates' from accumulating further wealth at his expense (Tucker, 1920, p338). Ferguson states that English maritime supremacy was rooted in 'seaborne violence and theft' (Ferguson, 2003, p1). Philip executed any pirates he could catch and Elizabeth knighted the ones who got away (Lang, 2006, p179). Determined to 'settle accounts for ever' (Bracco, 2006, p53) Philip declared war against Elizabeth in 1588. The Spanish fleet was ordered to sea where it met English vessels that were faster, more manoeuvrable and manned by crews who excelled in the 'science of naval gunnery' (Griffiths, 1952, p48). The Armada was so mauled by the English force and some unexpectedly foul weather that the attack was abandoned (Thackeray & Findling, 2001, p188). This defeat removed the most imminent threat to English security and freed previously unavailable sea routes for commercial expansion (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p58).

These new maritime opportunities prompted the launch of the East India Company, which was awarded a royal charter 1600. A charter carried the right to act in the monarch's name for as long as company dividends were paid to the crown (Low, 2009, p9). Globalisation studies have identified the East India Company as a 'pioneering force' in the development of world trade (Robins, 2004, p31). Its 'global reach' was to become a 'defining feature' of seventeenth and eighteenth century trade (Rocher, 2004, p207). The Company intended to trade with the East Indian islands of Java and Sumatra, a successful voyage to buy spices could show profits of up to one thousand percent (Allitt, 2009, L4).

The 'spice islands' were already occupied by Dutch traders who were prepared to fight for such large profits and it took a twenty-year trade war to convince the English merchants that their business would be better concentrated on the Indian subcontinent (Spear, 1961, p167).

This change of trade location altered the Company's main cargos from spice to indigo, calicos, cotton, sugar and yarn (Spear, 1961, p167). International trading and decreasing shipping costs should theoretically produce a 'commodity-price convergence' between sourcing and retailing, but there was no discernable reduction (O'Rourke & Williamson, 2002, p424). Legrain states that the price gap did not narrow because trade was not free. Cheaper transport was being offset by high import duties and the manipulation of the market by 'state-sponsored monopolies like the East India Company' (Legrain, 2003, p85-86).

When Elizabeth I died in 1603 without issue, James, King of Scotland and first cousin twice removed, accepted the vacant throne. His overbearingly 'autocratic behavior' succeeded in antagonising two parliaments instead of one (Knox, 2004, p2). He believed the universities to be the 'solid bulwarks' of society (Roberts, 1947, p23) and so extended to Oxbridge the already existent Scots right of a university to elect its own Member of Parliament. This further removed the universities from their ecclesiastical origins as the clergy were 'explicitly excluded' from the House of Commons (Curtis, 1959, p30). Although largely remembered as the principle target of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot, James was a literary monarch who was said to have ruled with the 'pen as much as the sword' (Doelman, 2000, p78). He ordered Oxford and Cambridge scholars to produce a new translation of the English bible (Roberts, 1947, p24). Its first readers would have witnessed eighteen years of civil war, the English monarchy abolished, a king executed, a commonwealth declared and then quashed. The country's capital city suffered both a great plague and a great fire (Lang, 2006, pp213-215).

However, Parliament rejected the mid seventeenth century English commonwealth and in 1660 accepted the return of the monarchy. Charles II was convinced that the civil war had been caused by 'religious pluralism' and he wanted this multiplicity of sects politically excluded in the future (Hutson, 2008, p6). Hence, the Test and Corporation Act required that all public officials swear an oath of allegiance to the national religion (Whiteman, 1962 p79). Any who refused would be labelled 'dissenters' and would be unable to hold civic or governmental office or attend university (Watts, 1995, p345).
A significant proportion of these new dissenters were middle class, most were well educated, and some were wealthy (Ashton, 1962, p19). Denied access to the universities they began founding 'Dissenters Academies' (Butts, 1955, p210).

These institutions were intended to provide students with higher education that was ‘similar to that at the universities’ (Rivers, 2007, p2).

The Academies were unencumbered by the Aristotelian tradition, so beyond their religious obligation they had the ‘intellectual freedom’ to teach a more commercially oriented curriculum that included science, medicine, and technology (Shaw, 1907). The views of dissenting intellectuals began to closely parallel the fundamentals of the enlightenment (Kreis, 1984, p7). Academies adjusted their curricula to incorporate recent thinking in science and engineering and generally provided an education that prepared students for the more practical aspects of life (Prueter, 2004, p3). Since nonconformists were prohibited from civic duties some of the country’s brightest graduates now applied themselves to commerce and manufacture (Watts, 1995, p345). A significant number of innovative dissenters became associated with the expansion of industry (Ashton, 1962, p21), the more adroit businessmen being those able to accept others as ‘potential customers’ rather than assail them as ‘potential converts’ (Watts, 1995, p342). Graduates from dissenting acadamies may have been deprived of the ‘advantages and privileges’ of an Oxbridge university education (Curtis, 1959, p279) but they were well prepared for the ‘more relevant’ globalising market (Prueter, 2004, p3).

In the years that followed the defeat of Spain’s Armada the Spanish Atlantic presence was so significantly reduced that the English were able to begin acquiring their own new world territories (Scammell, 2004, p25). In 1607 settlers founded Jamestown, Virginia. Although initially disappointed at the lack of precious metals they were soon employed in the ‘almost as lucrative’ cultivation of tobacco (Allitt, 2009, L2). Tobacco was a ‘poor man’s’ crop, requiring little capital and much hard work (Allitt, 2009, L3) but was so profitable that Virginia quickly became America’s first ‘get-rich-quick scheme’ (Hutson, 2008, p11).

Almost four hundred thousand people seeking to escape England’s political uncertainties voluntarily crossed the Atlantic during the late seventeenth century. Additional thousands were ‘forcibly transported’ for a variety of often rather insignificant 'crimes' such as vagrancy (Morrill, 2000, p12). Religious non-conformists, a broad group that included Quakers, could be transported for merely assembling in ‘pretence of religious worship’ (Child, 1751, p139).

But once in Virginia few English settlers could survive the backbreaking labour, suffocating heat and malarial swamps (Allitt, 2009, L3). Death from exhaustion or disease often occurred before 'they could be replaced by the next boatload of benighted settlers' (Hutson, 2008, p11).
Europeans could not do the work so the tobacco planters began buying hardier, acclimatised African slaves (Coatsworth, 2004, p45). The slaves enabled Virginia to prosper. By 1650 it was annually exporting one and a half million pounds of tobacco to Europe (Allitt, 2009, L3).

So great were the returns that English tobacco growers were prepared to risk planting on some of the smaller, and hitherto ignored, islands of the Spanish Caribbean (Allitt, 2009, L3). This slow encroachment escalated into a desire to expel the Spanish entirely and in 1655 the English successfully captured Jamaica, the 'heart of the Caribbean' (Scammell, 2004, p25). The 'fundamental role' of the navy in the area was to protect the islands and their attendant merchant ships, thus creating the confidence and the economic stability required to bring in the big investors (Bracco, 2006, p52). These entrepreneurs now started plantations for sugar rather than tobacco. European demand for the sweetener had soared; of all the new world products sugar was the one that 'really mattered' (Lang, 2006, p304). Only big investors could fund the 'great sugar cane venture' as, apart from an ideal climate, it required high capital outlay, specialised equipment and slavery on a 'huge scale' (Bracco, 2006, p32). The Caribbean became one of the richest regions in the world, easily eclipsing the thirteen English colonies in North America (Coatsworth, 2004, p45). By 1700 England monopolised the slave trade and had established the Atlantic triangle (Scammell, 2004, p25). This trade pattern saw ships taking English manufactured goods to Africa, reloading with slaves bound for the Caribbean and America, and then returning to England with sugar and tobacco (Smellie, 1962, p77).

International trade was booming, but it was still regulated by tariffs and duties. Henry Martyn's book of 1701, 'Considerations upon the East India Trade' is considered the first to publically question the 'mercantilist orthodoxy' (Legrain, 2003, p87) and to promote the 'mechanisms of unfettered trade' (MacLeod, 1983, p228). Martyn argued that it was only import tariffs that made the 'vain labour' of underpaid workers economically viable.

If the duties were removed these same goods could be cheaply imported and the workers employed on tasks of ‘value to the nation’ (Martyn, 1701, pp34-35). Martyn's ‘eloquent words’ fell on ‘deaf ears’ (Legrain, 2003, pp86-87).

In 1707, Scotland and England having shared the same monarchs for almost a century agreed to share the same Parliament and were amalgamated into the union of Great Britain. In 1756 this union, along with the other major European powers was drawn into what would become known at the ‘Seven Years War’. Britain’s fighting forces were greatly enhanced by the temporary addition of the ships and soldiers of the East India Company; ‘military muscle’ had always been ‘an integral component’ of the way in which the corporation conducted its business (Rocher, 2004, p207). When in 1763 the war stuttered to a close, British territorial gains were so substantial that, when combined with existing holdings, Britain could claim to be the world’s foremost colonial power (O’Farrell, 2007, p249).

But the war had been expensive and Britain now sought to recoup some of its ‘great cost’ by increasing the taxes from its territorial possessions in North America and Asia (Seavoy, 2003, p113). Westminster was beginning to appreciate the financial benefits of a ‘truly global’ empire (Pitts, 2005, p12) even though some territories were more troublesome than others. The Seven Years War had banished French and the Spanish settlements from North America. The English colonists now relieved of the threat of ‘catholic encirclement’ began to display a new level of assertiveness (Allitt, 2009, L1). The prosperous colonists did not object in principle to taxation but in return wanted to be represented in Parliament (Lang, 2006, p268). Their demands were strengthened by a boycott of imported British goods on which a tax was levied (Lloyd, 2001, p47). This manoeuvre so damaged British trade that Westminster abolished all duties except that on tea which was kept ‘for principles sake’ (Lavell & Payne, 1918, p125). In response the colonist boycott was lifted on all commodities but tea, which they continued to purchase from local smugglers (Lloyd, 2001, p48). The British government’s solution was to propose that the East India Company, which was experiencing economic difficulties, should export tea, which it had in abundance, to America and taxed at only three pence per pound instead of one shilling. This would generate funds for the Company as well as offering the colonists a ‘bargain so irresistible’ that they would break their boycott (Lloyd, 2001, p48).

The merchants and smugglers whose prices this would undercut began creating a groundswell of discontent (Cross, 1920, p527). By the time the East India Company's ships arrived the colonists were aggrieved enough to refuse to land the tea and it remained on the anchored ships for two months (Davies, 2004, p67). Finally a force of over a hundred men boarded the three ships moored in Boston Harbour and spent several hours dumping the whole consignment overboard (Lloyd, 2001, p48). British retaliation was swift. The state of Massachusetts would be absorbed into Canada and Boston Harbour would be closed until the East India Company was compensated. Four thousand troops were dispatched to Boston to ensure compliance (Davies, 2004, p68). Other American colonists deeply resented this intervention on behalf of a trading monopoly and resolved to stand with the Bostonians (Lloyd, 2001, p48).

The road from 'post tea party fervour' to revolution was 'a short one' (Davies, 2004, p68). Troops and colonists exchanged shots at Lexington in April 1774 and so started the 'civil war' that would make the colonists independent (Lavell & Payne, 1918, p127). Seven years later, an outnumbered British military commander surrendered to a combined American and French force at Yorktown and effectively ended any hope of a British victory (Cross, 1920, p536). Westminster voted to abandon the war and entered into negotiations with the former colonists (Davies, 2004, p77). The United States of America was created by treaty in 1783 (Allitt, 2009, L7).

While it was humiliating for the British to lose their American colonies, the empire was 'far from shattered' (Ferguson, 2003, p101). Anglo-American commerce quickly recovered and the trade in cotton was to rise exponentially during the next two decades (Allitt, 2009, L7). But the real wealth of the new world was in Caribbean sugar. British merchants had 'four times' more capital invested in slave-worked sugar plantations than in the whole of India (Proudman, 2008, p367). The sugar trade was 'so rich' that there had been serious consideration of returning Canada to the French in exchange for 'just one sugar island' (Lang, 2006, p304).

In 1776, the same year as the colonists signed their declaration of independence, Scottish philosopher Adam Smith published his hugely influential book ‘An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations’. Smith argued that economies could be safely left to run themselves without governmental interference and that all countries should abolish import duties as obstacles to free and more successful trade.

Smith’s book set out the ‘doctrines of free trade, laissez-faire capitalism and the economic rationism’ that became the ideological basis for globalisation (Raudzens, 1999, p171).

Chapter 1 1789-1890

The beginning of the long nineteenth century is marked by the rise of the 1789 French Revolution's liberal 'bourgeoisie'; a class which Hobsbawn identifies as the forerunners of the neoliberals who were to claim the capitalist 'conquest of the globe' by 1989 (Hobsbawn, 1987, p9). Before the French Revolution descended into 'mindless and vengeful chaos' (Doyle, 2001, p4) the largely bourgeois National Assembly produced 'something entirely new' in the 1789 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen' (Doyle, 2001, p15). The sentiments expressed in this document proved fundamental to the concept of human rights and its echoes appear in many subsequent international agreements and treaties (Doyle, 2001, p17).

In this chapter I explain how the opportunistic politics of post revolutionary France created the circumstances that led to the research-based methods that would revolutionise German universities. This research based concept was in turn adopted by London's two newly founded universities; both went on to thrive in the economic boom that followed Britain's mid nineteenth century declaration of free trade. Here I also deal with the revitalisation of English education by Arnold and Newman and how their ideals shaped the Oxbridge ethos of the gentleman graduate and how that permeated the entry examinations for the domestic and imperial civil service. The chapter also illustrates how the Great Exhibition of 1851, an event that generated sufficient funds for the founding institutions of research and technical education, represented the global reach of the expanding British Empire. This momentum encouraged the philanthropic creation of a network of technical colleges that would campaign to be upgraded to chartered universities before the end of the century.

The chapter starts with the French Revolution that Hobsbawn argues was a direct consequence of its American counterpart (Hobsbawn, 1996, p58).

The French tyrannies

King Louis XVI supported the rebellious American colonists as an act of revenge against the British for their seizure of the French Caribbean islands (Doyle, 2001, p20). The degree of French involvement rose exponentially and the ultimate victory at Yorktown was undeniably more 'French than American' (Doyle, 2001, p20).

It was followed by a speedy resolution in which Britain and the colonists settled their differences and signed a treaty without the 'knowledge and consent' of France (Lavell & Payne, 1918, p134). British merchants swiftly resumed trading with the independent Americans and Louis was left with no territorial gain or trading advantage to show for an expenditure which had brought France to the brink of bankruptcy (Rudé, 1976, p660).

The financial crisis worsened and by 1788 food shortages, escalating prices and mass unemployment combined with an unusually severe winter caused widespread hardship and a threat to public order (Rudé, 1976, p660). Louis's incompetent bureaucracy was at a loss, the upper classes were obstructive and the lower were obstreperous; Louis desperately needed the cooperation of the 'bourgeoisie' the educated middle class (Hobsbawn, 1996, p60). This he achieved by the revival of a medieval representative assembly, the 'Estates-General' for which the bourgeoisie were invited to stand for office (Frey & Frey, 2004, p3). The new congress met on May 5th 1789 but so different were the aims of its various cliques that it quickly became politically deadlocked. In Paris bread riots broke out; the hopes for the Estates-General 'began to turn sour' (Doyle, 2001, p39). Desperate to regain order the bourgeois deputies declared themselves, and as many of the clergy and nobles as would join them, to be a National Assembly on June 10th (Rudé, 1976, p668).

This assumption of power confirmed the notion of the people as a sovereign nation (Doyle, 2001, p40) and the people accepted 'the nation' as a 'revolutionary concept' (Hobsbawn, 1996, p60). The ungovernable mob is another revolutionary concept and in Paris they raided shops, storehouses and monasteries in search of food and weapons (Rudé, 1976, p672). In this 'electrified atmosphere' the rioters stormed the Bastille on July 14th (Rapport, 2008, p351), this was the act that emboldened the peasants all over France to rise up as a vast but 'irresistible movement' (Hobsbawn, 1996, p61).

In August 1789 members of the National Assembly in Paris formulated their 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens' (Frey & Frey, 2004, p5). It sought to replace the medieval view of a society dominated by monarchy, aristocracy and religious authority with the concepts of 'liberté, egalité, et fraternité' (Thomas, 2012). While the Westphalia treaty delineated a geographical area, the Rights of Man, in a 'powerful innovation' bound the population of that area to the land as a nation-state (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p102).

In both Britain and America these worthy sentiments were dismissed as mere ‘catching up’ (Doyle, 2001, p3). Britain’s virtually bloodless ‘Glorious Revolution’ of over a hundred years earlier had produced an ‘English Bill of Rights’ and the more recent American Constitution had been written twelve years before (Davis, 2009, p115).

However, the English Bill was less of a declaration than a ‘political settlement’ which sought to enshrine the 'ancient rights and liberties' of Parliament by laying down the exact parameters of the monarch’s power (Clapham, 2007, p6). The American Bill was an adaptation of the English Bill but with a ‘series of afterthoughts and amendments’, but both documents applied quite specifically to circumstances that prevailed in their countries of origin (Doyle, 2001, p16). The ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens’ was intended as a universal legal instrument (Frey & Frey, 2004, p5). The declared rights of security, equality and freedom were intended to be ‘applicable everywhere’ they would become the expected standard by which ‘all citizens could measure the behaviour of governments’ (Doyle, 2001, p16). Its expressions of equality were repeated in the 1948 United Nations ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ and the 1953 ‘European Convention on Human Rights’ (Doyle, 2001, p17).

But these were eventual outcomes; in the years immediately following the declaration the revolution was commandeered by ruthless revenge-hungry mobs (Frey & Frey, 2004, p11). In 1792 France declared itself a republic and King Louis was guillotined (Hobsbawn, 1996, p64; Lang, 2006, p273). A series of rapid coups saw the country fall under the dictatorship of the ‘Committee of Public Safety’ a political clique intent on ‘crushing internal opposition’ (Doyle, 2001, p55). So began the reign of ‘Terror’ (Thomas, 2012). The constitution was suspended and virtually any citizen ‘even suspected of disloyalty’ could be arrested and swiftly sent to the guillotine (Frey & Frey, 2004, p11) Hobsbawn estimates that seventeen thousand ‘enemies of the state’ were executed in the first fourteen months of the Terror (Hobsbawn, 1996, p68).

The anarchistic republic was unable or unwilling to maintain cordial relations with its European neighbours and virtually all of them saw the opportunity for territorial gains and declared war (Hazen, 1920, p180). Inadequately equipped and poorly led French troops struggled to prevent invasion and counter-revolution (Van Loon, 1921, p348).

After successfully repelling attackers during a siege, Napoleon Bonaparte, a Corsican, whose island homeland the revolutionary government had liberated was touted as an example of the French citizen-soldier (Van Loon, 1921, p351). By October 1795 Napoleon had suppressed another counter-revolution and had consolidated his position with a politically advantageous marriage (Weiner, 2005, L5). Fast becoming a national hero he was appointed commander-in-chief of the French troops stationed in Italy (Mishra, 2008, p95). In a swift and successful military campaign, Napoleon the 'greatest of actors' (Van Loon, 1921, p351) was able to inspire his armies to seize both Venice and Austria for France (Mishra, 2008, p95).

Napoleon next proposed to capture Egypt in order to disrupt Britain's trade routes with India (Hazen, 1920, p226). In May 1798 four hundred French ships landed thousands of troops on the Egyptian coast near Alexandria (Hazen, 1920, p227). While Napoleon's armies battled their way inland, British Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson mounted a surprise attack on the anchored French fleet and sank all but three of them (Mishra, 2008, p95). Napoleon's army was trapped (Hazen, 1920, p228). For eighteen months, battles costing thousands of lives raged back and forth across Egypt and Syria. When it became obvious that the expedition 'must inevitably fail' (Hazen, 1920, p229) Napoleon 'secretly' escaped alone from Egypt (Hazen, 1920, p230) leaving his army to 'face the music' or get home as best they could (Herold, 1962, p341). Arriving back in Paris in September 1799 Napoleon found an administration on the brink of collapse (Hazen, 1920, p230). While he still had the support of the domestic militia (Herold, 1962, p333) a coup d'état was mounted. A 'trumped up' plot against the republic was given as the excuse to oust the existing administration and to appoint three Consuls, one of whom was General Bonaparte (Hazen, 1920, p233). Within four years Napoleon had divested himself of his two co-consuls and summoned the Pope to officiate at his coronation as Emperor (Van Loon, 1921, p353).

In 1805 the French lost a second fleet of ships to the British. Twenty-seven vessels led by, Admiral, now Lord, Nelson had attacked thirty-three French ships off the Spanish coast near Cape Trafalgar. It was a decisive British victory with twenty-two of the French ships sunk. Nelson lost no ships but was himself killed (Roberts, 2005, pp45-47). This was small consolation to Emperor Napoleon who, no longer able to wage war at sea, began to consider a 'European colonial system' (Davis, 2006, p130).

The target of this inland expansion was to be the loosely confederated German states that comprised the 'soft centre' of the continent (Blanning, 1998, p37). Under his leadership French troops seized vast tracts of the continental interior (Dobbelaer, 2007). Napoleon abolished all of the previous boundaries and redisignated the land as either part of France or the property of his relations. He conceded that Prussia should remain under the management of its German princes, but only after they had sworn obedience to their new Emperor (Blanning, 1998, p37). In adopting this political expedience Napoleon was unwittingly giving Prussia the territorial advantage that would be the first step in unifying all of the German states (Blanning, 1998, p40).

Many of these states had been created in 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia had officially brought Europe's Thirty Years War to a close (Cavendish, 1998, p50). The Treaty established political equilibrium by creating over three hundred 'sovereign' nation states (Sampford, 2005, p9) and in consequence 'Westphalian' principles are still recognised as the 'basic system of governance' of the independent nation state (Suter, 2006, p421). With such systems comes the requirement for an efficient bureacracy and in 1807, the Prussian government tentatively introduced a series of social and administrative reforms. The initiatives failed because they were resisted by the obstructive and often poorly educated incumbant officers (Hohendorf, 2000, p619). The country's bureaucracy needed a more progressive middle class and that meant better higher education (Blanning, 1998, p39).

Von Humboldt's concept

The Prussian government determined that they would create an efficient state through a reinvigorated programme of education and culture that would begin with a new university in Berlin (Vernon, 2004, p16). The search for someone capable of designing an education system to match these aspirations lighted upon Wilhelm von Humboldt, a methodical career civil servant working as an envoy to the Vatican (Hohendorf, 2000, p619). From his first day in February 1809, von Humboldt took just sixteen months to formulate an academic plan for the newly founded University of Berlin (Hohendorf, 2000, pp613-619). Drawing on the ideas of the 'late Enlightenment' (Rothblatt, 2000, p620) and greatly influenced by humanist thinking and his own classical studies while in Rome, von Humboldt designed an innovative non-vocational educational system that required teaching and research to be practiced simultaneously (Hohendorf, 2000, p620).

This was a significant element of Von Humboldt's approach; he was convinced that the proximity of research to teaching would lead to fresh discoveries and new knowledge (Anderson, 2006, p29). The University of Berlin, today the Humboldt University of Berlin (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) was to be an 'intellectual powerhouse' (Anderson, 2006, p29), a centre for original research, where students would be released from the 'overgrown schoolhouse' and allowed to investigate rather than simply 'regurgitate' the knowledge of the past (Vernon, 2004, p17).

The new regime was quickly approved and applied. Von Humboldt's 'modern Research University' freed students from 'patronising supervision' and encouraged them to concentrate on specialist areas (Goztepe-Celebi et al, 2004, p1). Equally their professors could accrue increased academic status by researching and publishing 'innovative ideas' (Vernon, 2004, p17). Prussian higher education gained international recognition as a leader in scientific laboratory experiments and instruction. Their observation of the natural world and humanities research was also producing new ideas in philosophy, history and linguistics (Anderson, 2006, p32). A new stress was placed on 'independent study' that was free of 'religious dogma', but not at the expense of theology which remained a significant element of Humboldtian higher education (Tingley, 2000, p30).

In 1815 Napoleon's armies were 'crushed' at Waterloo by a combined force led by Britain and Prussia (Lloyd, 2001, p60). The French retreated and peace was restored. This left the Prussians free to combine with other Germanic states and build an infrastructure that included an expanded Prussian university system. Its 'impressive intellectual achievements' were repeated in the new German cities as the Humboldtian model was adopted nationally (Anderson, 2006, p32). Anderson states that this expansion of Humboldt's programme assisted in the promotion of rising secularisation, nationalism and the 'shift of social power' from the landowners to the professional middle classes (Anderson, 2010).

Foreign observers were so much impressed by the international prominence of German graduates that Humboldtian elements began to colour the teaching strategies in other European and some American universities. (Ash, 2006, p45; Scott, 2006, p18).

Adam Smith revisited

Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805, 'finally assured' British dominance of the seas (Davis, 2006, p130). The extent of British expansion into overseas territories and colonies was acquiring the gravitas of empire (Lloyd, 2001, p60). In the event of a problem, which required a military solution, the first threats would be an economic blockade or trade sanctions (Davis, 2006, p130). The destabilising effect of blocking international commerce and the movement of money was a new area of study for political tacticians. Adam Smith had died in 1790 but in an era before the economy was widely understood his economic observations began to take on a special significance (Allitt, 2009, L9).

Smith's 1776 publication, 'An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations', was the first to offer a 'systematic' overview of a national economy (Legrain, 2003, p87). Its conclusions ranged from the proposition that free markets would regulate themselves as if guided by an 'invisible hand' (Smith, 1937, p423), to a thinly disguised 'attack on mercantilism' (Irwin, 1996, p10). Smith argued that the wealth of a nation is not measured by its accumulation of precious metals, but by the 'abundance or scarcity' of goods, manufactured and traded (Smith, 1937, pp398-399). Smith regarded the Cape of Good Hope route to India and the trade with the America's as the two 'most important events' in history. Apart from greater commercial opportunities both territories proved to be a source of silver which allowed world commerce to expand (Smith, 1937, p590). Legrain states that the early nineteenth century was witness to many 'powerful' developments which collectively 'began to turn the tide against mercantilism' (Legrain, 2003, p88).

Smith was by no means an unqualified supporter of free trade but he discouraged governmental interference in the economy and was especially critical of collusion between the state and trading monopolies such as the East India Company. Despite recent suggestions that this corporation pioneered the 'birth of modern consumerism' Smith's comments are still considered valid (Robins, 2004, p31). He stressed that prices would be kept artificially high by both the lack of competition and the inability of so large a corporation to prevent 'waste... fraud and abuse' for which the consumer would ultimately be expected to pay (Smith, 1937, p596). Smith objected to these vast companies behaving like monarchies in the countries they had 'conquered' (Smith, 1937, p601) and accused them of creating a 'great empire' for the 'sole purpose of raising up a nation of customers' (Smith, 1937, p626).

Many political figures were influenced by Smith's questioning of the 'intellectual basis' of mercantilism (Howe, 1997, p2) and by 1800 he had posthumously become the patron saint of that faith of which 'freedom of trade was an indispensable part' (Magnusson, 2004, p5). Predictions of financial instability became reality when the East India Company, an arch practitioner of restrictive mercantilism ran into economic difficulties (Jones, 2003). The corporation had attempted to secure greater profits by extending its militia backed political control of India and had seized a wider geographical area than it could possibly manage (Raudzens, 1999, p156). In 1813 a parliamentary inquiry found the company wallowing in a deadly combination of chaotic administration and huge financial losses (Lawson, 1993, p141). An anti-monoply faction lobbied to have the Company stripped of its special trading privileges; their 'most-cited' slogans were the words of Adam Smith. Phrases from 'The Wealth of Nations' were used to justify attacks on the state sponsored monopoly of the India trade (Lawson, 1993, p138). Unsurprisingly the India Act of 1813 declared Parliamentary 'sovereignty over the Company's dominions' (Griffiths, 1961, p215). The Company's charter was renewed but retained little of the original mandate and completely abolished the Company's long held monopoly (Misra, 1959, pp51-2). The Company was left as little more than a 'bureaucratic shell', without any special privilege but still having to accept the responsibility for governing the country (Lawson 1993, p142).

Adam Smith's work provided an 'intellectual starting-point' for many early nineteenth century economic thinkers (Haakonssen, 1985, p628). James Mill and David Ricardo were prominent among these and both later refined Smiths ideas (Legrain, 2003, p88) by clearly restating the 'theory of comparative advantage' (Jones, 2003). Ricardo's illustration highlighted the low labour costs and good weather of a country like Portugal. These conditions made the production of exportable wine more cost effective that weaving cloth which was better manufactured elsewhere and imported with the vineyard profits (Ricardo, 1929, p82).
Both Ricardo and Mill believed that international trade would prosper if countries were to specialise in products in which they had a 'comparative rather than an absolute advantage' (Legrain, 2003, p88).

The writings of Smith and his followers was to provide the advocates of free trade with their most effective arguments, and would eventually become one of the 'central aspects of economic globalization' (Went, 2000, p655). The Wealth of Nations has been seen as a champion of 'individual liberty', which has promoted the free market as being morally superior to other economic systems (Brown, 1994, p181). The philosophical tone of the work is unsurprising as Smith was for twelve years a professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow University where his teachings integrated 'moral philosophy, jurisprudence, politics and economics' (Brown, 1994, p182). He presented an overview in which the rules of law, the economy and politics rested upon the virtues of justice, 'prudent self-interest' and public spiritedness, respectively (Haakonssen, 2006, p20). Mill and Ricardo were very much public-spirited political economists. Though each had a different view of society both advocated electoral reform, extension of the voting franchise and the benefits of a secret ballot (Milgate & Stimson, 2009, p8-9). Mill investigated what might be required of a voter to exercise 'sound judgment and good political choice'; his conclusion was that 'education was the answer' (Milgate & Stimson, 2009, p164). This was a view with which Adam Smith, a 'fully paid-up member of the Enlightenment' would have agreed (Berry, 2006, p135).

London's University and King's Colleges

In 1825 a British visitor to Germany's Humboldtian university in Bonn was so impressed that on his return to London he wrote a letter to the Times newspaper. He extolled the virtues of Bonn and declared his intention of founding such a university in London (Malony, 1993, p33). The proposal was met with enthusiasm by a diverse group of British Humboldtian supporters who roughly divided into 'nonconformist divines' and 'philosophical radicals' (Roberts, 1947, p37). Given the potential for religious argument within its own ranks this proposal group neatly sidestepped the issue by making the curriculum and the constitution of the new university free of any theological doctrine (Roberts, 1947, p37).

This 'godless university' would be in line with its French and German counterparts (Powicke, 1947, p247) as well as British liberal thinking which sought to reduce the power of the 'overmighty church' (Anderson, 2006, p27).

Although meetings of the new university group were presided over by London's Lord Mayor there was little municipal support (Barnard, 1961, p84), so initially the project could only progress as a commercial venture. In 1827 the 'proprietors' of the University of London acquired a site of an 'old rubbish dump' in Gower Street, and laid a foundation stone (Armytage, 1955, p171). An appeal for funds was met with sufficient generosity that the university was able to open a year later with three hundred students (Roberts, 1947, p37). That the venture was so rapidly successful indicates that it filled an 'obvious gap' (Anderson, 2006, p27), but the University of London remained an unchartered institution and a commercial company. This become the basis of a campaign of objections 'led by medical schools' that a private company could not assume the functions of a university because it could not grant degrees. The company countered by retitling their venture the 'University College of London' (Powicke, 1947, p246). Oxford and Cambridge universities remained hostile; they saw the new institution as lacking the 'essential quality of a true university' (Powicke, 1947, p247).

The Rector of Lambeth denounced the 'godlessness of Gower Street' (Roberts, 1947, p37) and demanded a Christian university for London (Dowland, 1997, p35). By June 1828, the Rector's committee numbered several bishops and archbishops as well as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel (Dowland, 1997, p42). This second new university would, like its Gower Street rival, provide 'cheap and useful' higher education (Vernon, 2004, p53) but on an 'Anglican basis' (Roberts, 1947, p37). King George IV agreed to act as patron, which led to the institution being titled, 'King's College' (Roberts, 1947, p37). The monarch granted the college a considerable plot of Crown land near Somerset House between the 'Thames and the Strand' (Roberts, 1947, p38). In 1829 a Royal Charter of Incorporation for the college named leading parliamentarians and the Lord mayor as ex-officios while prominent ecclesiastics were enrolled as the official governors (Dowland, 1997, p42).

King's College was opened in 1831. It suffered fewer pangs than University College though its first principle, the Rector of Lambeth's brother in law, was forced to resign for being 'disconcertingly' friendly with the Gower Street opposition (Dowland, 1997, p43). Thus by the 1830's, London had two universities but neither had the power to grant a degree. An early suggestion for the institutions to merge for examining purposes was rejected by both (Barnard, 1961, p85; Roberts, 1947, p38).

A second solution was the creation of an external examining body unconnected to either institution. This did not suit King's College because it made no distinction between 'religious persuasions' (Roberts, 1947, p38). University College complained that the proposed body was to be termed, the 'University of London'. This was their original choice of name and acceptance would prevent them from ever claiming it back (Barnard, 1961, p85; Roberts, 1947, p38). However both institutions needed a mechanism for qualifying their students and so reluctantly agreed. In 1836 the State created the University of London, a 'public, non-denominational body' (Anderson, 2006, p27) that would become the 'board of examiners for the Empire' (Roberts, 1947, p38).

Although Oxford and Cambridge universities had never held a monopoly as providers of higher education, their position in being able to confer degrees was unique (Powicke, 1947, p245; Roberts, 1947, p37). The University of London 'solution' had changed that. From 1836 it was possible to study at institutions other than Oxford or Cambridge and still be eligible for entry into examinations that led to a degree (Barnard, 1961, p83). Although this extended the available curriculum into 'modern studies and science' (Barnard, 1961, p84) neither the University of London nor the Oxbridge institutions were yet accepting the 'emerging discipline of economics' as a 'subject suitable for study' (Soffer, 1994, p58-59). This, however, did not prevent private publication and in 1827 there appeared 'A Catechism on the Corn Laws, by a Member of the University of Cambridge' (Apjohn, 1881, p59). Written by 'ardent' economist, Colonel T. Perronet Thompson, this enormously popular pamphlet appeared in twenty different editions during the following twelve years and provided a group of Manchester industrialists with a basis on which to found the Anti-Corn Law League in 1839 (Apjohn, 1881, p59).

Free trade, the Corn Law and the gold standard

The Corn Law was the most significant barrier to early nineteenth century free trade. It restricted competitive imports while keeping the price of home-grown wheat artificially high (Gash, 1986). The Anti-Corn Law League campaigned against the protectionist Corn Law because, they claimed, it increased bread prices reduced the money available for other purchases and eventually increased unemployment (Fontana, 2006, p226).

The Anti-Corn Law League were pressing for the government to fulfill its 1820 declaration that all future commercial policies would be 'guided' by the principles of free trade (Grampp, 1987, p86).

Some government factions had begun to see an international exchange of goods unimpeded by duties or taxes, as a way of increasing exports and stimulating the economy (Howe, 1997, pvii). Legrain argues that the ideas of Smith, Mill and Ricardo were an important contributory factor in establishing this view (Legrain, 2003, p89). Ricardo, who sat in the commons from 1819 until his death in 1823 (Grampp, 1987, p93) exerted considerable influence over the government's decision to support free trade (Grampp, 1987, p86). Now twenty years later that declaration was still being obstructed by the Corn Law, the 'ark of the Tory Covenant' (Trevelyan, 1922, p204). This 'law' was a protectionist measure that was supported by the land owning squires who made up most of Prime Minister Robert Peel's Conservative government (Gash, 1986).

In the autumn of 1845, Peel, who was sympathetic to the Anti-Corn Law League (Fontana, 2006, p226), used the failure of the Irish potato crop as an excuse to lift restrictions and allow both domestic and imported wheat into Irish ports (Fay, 1932, p98). Once the principle of imported wheat appeared to have been accepted Peel went to his cabinet in November of that year and asked that they should consider a full repeal of the law (Magnusson, 2004, p48). The cabinet refused, Peel resigned, efforts to form another government failed and in December Peel was back and asked once again for a full repeal. This time it was carried and the Corn Law was abolished in 1846 (Fay, 1932, p99).

The Corn Law repeal was to mark the beginning of a 'true revolution' (Cain, 1999, p1). The removal of the last 'serious opposition' (Trevelyan, 1922, p276) to the world's first free trade policy was to prove 'an important building block' (Magnusson, 2004, p2) in a series of commercial and social developments that we now recognise as economic globalisation (Davies, 2005, p55). Cultural globalisation too was 'kick started' as the British government abolished its remaining import taxes (Legrain, 2003, p89) and prompted an immediate inflow of cheaper foreign-produced food and luxury goods.

The government's declaration of free trade not only marked the point at which a burgeoning empire moved from 'one economic regime to another' (Price, 1999, p88) but it ushered in a 'new global era' (McKeown, 2007, p219).

Worldwide trade had previously been obstructed by the lack of an international currency exchange system (Hirst, 1997, p410). Britain became the first 'major proponent' of globalising policies with the introduction of the international gold standard (Davies, 2005, p55). This mechanism was based on the requirement for the national bank of any country to know the gold value of their bank notes so that paper could be exchanged for metal if required. The fluctuating price of gold was fixed at 7.322 grammes to the British pound and the countries that signed up to the gold standard agreed to fix the gold equivalent of their monetary unit to that price. Currency rates between countries were calculated by the amount of gold each monetary unit could buy (Legrain, 2003, p86; Anikin, 1983, pp145-147).

The introduction of such an international monetary system was of the greatest advantage to the British, whose network of colonial possessions and trading stations amounted to a 'world-market on a vast scale' (Trevelyan, 1922, p276). It was natural therefore for Britain to stand as principal regulator and guarantor of the gold standard. Considerable international confidence was placed in the currency exchange simply because it was 'underwritten by the United Kingdom' (Hirst, 1997, p410). International business developed via this fixed exchange-rate system that was regulated from London, which became the centre of the 'financial solar system' (Ford, 1962, p18-19). The sterling-based gold standard dramatically increased the volume of mid nineteenth century world trade but was only applicable to industrially developed countries with relatively stable currencies (Steger, 2003, p32). The rest of the world had to 'adapt as best they could' (Anikin, 1983, p146).

Increasing free trade was to prove the mainspring of economic globalisation (Went, 2000, p655). Cheaper imports were seen as benefiting the consumer and the manufacturer alike (Cain, 1999, p1). Only those who had sheltered behind protectionist tariffs and were now 'exposed to international competition' could be considered the 'net losers' (Ferguson, 2003, pxx). The 'cogent and appealing liberal economic theories' of Smith and Ricardo (Jones, 2003) would have held little appeal for such people; Smith himself had little confidence in Britain adopting free trade describing the idea as 'absurd' (Smith, 1937, p437). It was 'comparative advantage' that carried the day; imports could reduce manufacturing costs by providing cheaper raw materials and thereby establishing British industrial supremacy (Cain, 1999, p1).

Foreign wheat imports broke the back of the protectionist argument and encouraged the investment in manufacturing that would make nineteenth century Britain ‘the richest country on earth’ (Passell, 1993).

Much of this new found wealth was in the pockets of the entrepreneurs and businessmen who were the main beneficiaries of a ‘capitalist’ free market regulated only by Smith’s 'invisible hand' (Steger, 2003, p31). With the removal of the Corn Law in 1846 came a new style of industrial investment which began ‘pulling out the props’ which had long supported the landowning elite (Wiener, 1992, p12). Those whose status in society was considered to be between the ‘upper and lower orders’ began to think of themselves as a ‘class’ and not simply of 'middle rank'(Hobsbawn, 1996, p185). The upper and middle strata of society became somewhat blurred as landowners extended their interests to railways, canals and mines and the ‘new’ middle class cultivated aristocratic interests in ‘style... leisure, and political service’ (Wiener, 1992, p12-13). The triumph of the Anti-Corn-Law League, ‘that most class conscious body’(Hobsbawn, 1996, p185), signalled the ‘victory of trade over the land’ (O’Farrell, 2007, p315). The bourgeois middle classes were replacing the aristocracy as a new political and economic force (Lichtheim, 1964, p136). The sons of the industrialists had little trouble being accepted by the upper classes provided that they were prepared to disavow their ‘backgrounds and their class’ (Wiener, 1992, p20). The ‘central institution’ for such transformations was the public school and the man who contributed greatly to this ‘separation’ of industrial origins and elitist future was Thomas Arnold (Wiener, 1992, p11-16).

Thomas Arnold

Despite being the most expensive educational provision in the country at that time, the ‘great public schools’ had long been in decline (Strachey, 1918, p207). The curriculum was almost entirely based on classical studies in Latin (Clarke, 1959, p173) and the institutions themselves had become notorious as ‘pits of anarchy and bullying’ (Barnett, 1987, p214). The teaching staff saw their role as to ‘render learning possible’. Any responsibility for system or discipline was secondary (Bradby, 1900, p55). Most pupils were boarders and slept in ‘unsupervised’ dormitories that were filthy and perpetually stank of ‘ordure and urine’ (Rubinstein, 1994, p104). Public school days, as well as nights, were filled with terror, rebellion, ‘appalling practical jokes’ and ‘savage ritual' (Strachey, 1918, p211).

Men of religion and influence denounced the ‘great scandal’ of the ‘unchristian’ circumstances in which the upper classes were educated (Worboise, 1870, p65). Dissatisfaction turned to demands for change; the public schools must either be reformed or replaced (Stanley, 1877, p85). This was the atmosphere in 1828 when the trustees of Rugby school in Warwickshire set about interviewing candidates for the post of headmaster. They elected Thomas Arnold, a man who came with impressive recommendations and who burned with reforming zeal (Strachey, 1918, p207). Arnold was forceful character and let it be known that he would brook no interference. Any dissatisfaction with his performance must be met with dismissal; he wanted no criticism, and his power must be ‘absolute’ (Stanley, 1877, p90). The trustees agreed to this and confirmed Arnold as Doctor of Divinity, the office required to perform his duties (Strachey, 1918, p207).

Dr Arnold had fixed ideas and every intention of carrying them through (Stanley, 1877, p109). Rugby school was an ‘average specimen’, the Doctor was aware of the challenge and was able to arrive with a serviceable plan (Stanley, 1877, p85). It had long been a feature of public schools that senior boys were permitted to exercise power over the juniors; Arnold endorsed and extended this practice by making each of sixth formers a Praepostor or prefect (Bradby, 1900, p56). These boys became the schools internal managing body and had real authority; Arnold believed that this demonstration of trust would be reciprocated (Strachey, 1918, p214). He refused to consider pupils as children, they were treated ‘rational’ adults (Worboise, 1870, p69).
While corporeal punishment was not advocated, Arnold considered flogging unavoidable in cases of ‘lying, drinking, or indomitable idleness’ (Worboise, 1870, p70). Sixth form Praepostors could administer a flogging but were themselves excused such punishment (Strachey, 1918, p217), any misuse of this privilege or other flagrant rule breaking would result in the ‘unpromising subject’ being expelled (Bradby, 1900, p56). Arnold insisted the school fees were increased, this was to improve the incomes of masters and assistants who were expected to devote all of their time to their school duties (Bradby, 1900, p58).

Educational reformers demanded that public schools embrace a more liberal curriculum and a ‘higher moral tone’ (Strachey, 1918, p212). Arnold recognised that new subjects, however ‘subordinate’, must be included in a ‘liberal’ regime (Norwood & Hope, 1909, p27).

Mathematics, modern history and modern languages made a ‘tentative’ curriculum appearance but accounted for less than one hour a week for each subject and pupils made little progress (Strachey, 1918, p218). More acceptable ancient history was taught from a large picture book depicting great heroes of the past in chronological order. Arnold required that the illustrations showed ‘striking characters’ undertaking ‘heroic actions’ so the boy might experience some ‘lasting association’ with the subject (Arnold, 1845, p357). Arnold admitted in a letter to the schools trustee’s that his pupils would ‘never learn to speak or pronounce French’ nor would they grasp the fundamentals of mathematics but this was what might be expected of subjects that were ‘taught but seldom’ (Stanley, 1877, pp120-121). Physical science proved too difficult to accommodate in one hour lessons and so was left out entirely (Strachey, 1918, p219).

In Dr Arnold’s opinion, education was largely about the ‘formation of character’ (Bradby, 1900, p55). He did not accept the headmastership at Rugby to ‘train’ scholars but to create ‘Christian gentlemen’ (Worboise, 1870, p69). This result would be achieved via the recognition of individual responsibility, countless soul saving sermons, diligent study of ancient Greek and Roman classics and strict discipline (Strachey, 1918, pp213-214). Arnold’s ‘cane lay close to the Bible’ (Guttsman, 1963, p151). Despite the more liberal curriculum at Rugby, it was the ‘dead languages’ of the ancients that would provide the ‘basis of all teaching’ (Strachey, 1918, p218).

During the nineteenth century the ‘bond’ between scholasticism and classical antiquity had been loosened by an increased archaeological understanding of ancient Greece and a belated appreciation of ‘Humanist’ thinking (Clarke, 1959, p172). Arnold recommended the classical authors for their views on history and philosophy rather than using their work as examples of ancient grammar (Norwood & Hope, 1909, p27). The Doctor was aware that those unfamiliar with the classics might consider it an ‘absurdity’ to spend so much of a valuable education studying the work of a ‘few ancient writers’ who were totally unacquainted with the contemporary world (Arnold, 1845, p348). In answer to such criticism Arnold declared that his intention was not to ‘fill’ his pupils with ‘useful information’, but to inspire them with classical examples to gain such information for themselves (Arnold, 1845, p356). He fervently believed that the moral and political building blocks of the ‘human character’ could be gleaned from a study of the work of Aristotle, Plato, Thucydides, Cicero, and Tacitus (Arnold, 1845, p349).

When interviewing potential pupils Arnold looked first for the highest principles, then for 'gentlemanly conduct' and lastly 'intellectual ability' (Strachey, 1918, p212). These values were shared by large numbers of wealthy English parents (Strachey, 1918, p213) and are displayed in the character of the country squire in Thomas Hughes' 'Tom Brown's School-Days'. In this 'testament of gratitude' to Dr Arnold (Wiener, 1992, p20), the squire sends his son to Rugby school because he wants him returned as a 'brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman' who is also a 'Christian' (Hughes, 1911, p71). The success of Thomas Arnold's educational experiment (Worboise, 1870, p69) was considered a great achievement. He had succeeded in transforming 'licensed barbarism' (Strachey, 1918, p211) into something 'more religious and less raffish' with the intention of attracting the offspring of a 'serious' middle class clientele (Anderson, 2006, p43). His personal contribution was cut short by sudden death in 1842 but his fame and his influence continued to be felt by countless contemporaries (Bradby, 1900, p63). Arnold left an evolving 'common ethos' and mid-Victorian 'social thought' enthusiastically accommodated and 'propagated it' (Wiener, 1992, p11). They took up the Arnoldian philosophy and transformed British public schools into the 'regimented, christianised, imperialised' institutions of 'legend' (Rubinstein, 1994, p104).

Thomas Arnold was eventually recognised as an innovative educationalist whose advice was sought by institions other than Rugby school (Barnett, 1987, p214). He was initially one of the governors of the University of London but resigned at the news that it would not be conferring degrees in theology (Williamson, 1964, p169: Strachey, 1918, p225). However his 'new romantic' vision of Christian education was to prove inspirational to so many of his pupils and his staff that it was transmitted by them to other public schools and to the universities (Barnett, 1987, p215).

The idea of a liberal arts education was shown to combine the 'aristocratic ideal of leadership and service' with the administrative skills required to govern both the empire and at home (Cain & Hopkins, 1993, p122). The combination of public schools and universities was to produce an elite that exhibited the 'amateurism and efficiency which was the mark of the English establishment well into the twentieth century' (Cain & Hopkins, 1993, p122).

Newman’s idea of a university

During the eighteenth century the ancient universities had ‘sunk’ in the public estimation, they ‘neither taught nor examined’ and were barely able to maintain discipline (Inge, 1922, p26). The nineteenth century educational reformers who so appreciated Arnold’s methods wanted to see a similar transformation in higher education. John Henry Newman was a fellow of Oriel College and the vicar of Oxford’s parish church; he converted to Roman Catholicism, became an influential priest and was eventually named a Cardinal (Turner, 2010, p119). In later life Cardinal Newman published 'The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated' being a collection of lectures he had first given during the 1850’s at Dublin University (Anderson, 2010). A critic of the period condemned Dublin’s ‘professed’ University as a Catholic outpost with no royal charter but conceded that such disadvantage should not diminish Newman’s lectures (Campbell, 1901, p4). Turner describes Cardinal Newman as a ‘brilliant’ thinker and writer who readily broadcast his opinions (Turner, 2010, p119). He frequently criticised the evangelical movement, a religious group whose response to rising scientific awareness was to steadfastly maintain that the Bible was the ultimate authority on everything (Bebbington, 2010, p236).

It could not be denied that the evangelicals wielded popular power, indeed their Clapham Sect and William Wilberforce had successfully convinced Parliament to abolish slavery throughout the empire in 1833 (Chapman, 2006, p61). Newman could not fault such humane action but he could loudly fault their teaching. Biblical literalists either tried to counteract scientific advances by quoting the Scriptures or vaguely alluded to some eventual ‘higher unity’ that was beyond present understanding (Livingston, 2010, p145). Newman’s standpoint was that science and theological knowledge occupied different ‘spheres’ that did not conflict or interfere with each other and that there was no need to try and reconcile them (Livingston, 2010, p145).

Central to this position was the Cardinal’s insistence that he was not speaking of knowledge in the ‘vague and ordinary sense’ but of that which connected with Christian revelation (Newman, 1886, p111). It was the actual process of the ‘search for truth’ that developed the ‘personality of the cultivated man’ (Anderson, 2010) and therefore any ‘knowledge’ attained had been pursued simply for ‘its own end’ (Newman, 1886, p111).

Newman's 'knowledge of God' was profitless in the financial sense; it was on a higher plane and therefore incomparable with scientific fact (Tingley, 2002, p16). Students who attended Newman's sermons were urged to study the Bible as the 'fountain head' of 'all doctrinal knowledge' and to use its inspiration to form original views. Newman was adamant that 'if we would solve new questions, it must be by consulting old answers' (Newman, 1886, p223). He justified this unabashed 'appeal to the ancients' by explaining that while the Apostles were the 'sole depository' of Christian Revelation so Aristotle was the 'oracle of nature and of truth' (Newman, 1886, p109).

In 'The Idea of a University' the Cardinal condemns such subjects as drawing, fencing, botany, 'stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments' as topics to occupy the mind but definitely 'not education' – because education was a 'preparation for knowledge' (Newman, 1886, p144). Only a 'liberal' preparation could cultivate the intellect with no other aim or motive than to achieve 'intellectual excellence' (Newman, 1886, p121). Newman proclaimed that 'liberal knowledge' was not 'useful knowledge' and nor was it intended to be (Newman, 1886, p112). The 'mechanical arts' might achieve unimaginable engineering and technical wonders but he did not think that the process of such 'brute creation' could rightly be described as 'knowledge' (Newman, 1886, p112). Newman equated 'liberal knowledge' with 'a gentleman's knowledge' (Newman, 1886, p111) the graduate was described as having a 'cultivated intellect' and a 'noble and courteous bearing' – these exclaims Newman 'are the objects of a University' (Newman, 1886, p120). The processes of education advocated by Newman and Arnold are markedly similar. Newman would have been familiar with Arnold's writing and when he remarked that the works of Virgil and Horace were more likely to appear in educational courses than those of Shakespeare and Milton, the Cardinal was closely paraphrasing the Doctor (Arnold, 1845, p348; Newman, 1886, p260).

Newman was aware of his detractors and acknowledged the 'protests' of the 'Edinburgh Reviewers', a group of writers who frequently questioned the wisdom of an education based on ancient classics (Newman, 1886, p160). Review writer Sydney Smith, bitterly complained of the 'infinite quantity of talent' that is 'destroyed' by the universities in the pursuit of a 'delusive sort of splendour' that is 'far from being useful' (Smith, 1845, p194).

Such comments and condemnations were to become more frequent and Anderson argues that while Newman's writing was 'seldom read or cited' during the Cardinal's lifetime, it became widely used by the twentieth century defenders of liberal education (Anderson, 2006, p100).

The ideals of Dr Arnold and Cardinal Newman were to be promoted and spread by the Victorian 'apostles of culture' to most public schools and to the universities. Their success was based on the continuing belief that non-vocational study produced graduates with skills applicable to a 'wide range of jobs' (Anderson, 2010). The universities produced large numbers of classically educated graduates, whom they claimed would be versatile enough to 'fill any post with credit' (Soffer, 1994, p18). Barnett argues that this defence of a 'wide' classical education as opposed to 'narrow' vocational training was misleading. Not only was a classical education more specialised in that it revolved around the 'minute study of a handful of texts' but was itself originally intended as 'vocational training - for clerics' (Barnett, 1987, p220).

Newman's gentlemanly graduate was required to add patriotism to his other qualities when Oxbridge extended its provision of graduates for a 'national elite' to include education for imperial 'leadership' (McCulloch, 1991, pix). As the concept of a geographically 'Greater Britain' was expanded to include all the territories within the Empire (Soffer, 1994, p95), it became necessary to ensure that colonial peoples would willingly consent to British rule and become 'new subjects' of the Crown. 'Education was key to that process' (Hall, 2008, p774). Oxbridge graduates 'monopolised' prestigious positions in government, administration and education (Soffer, 1994, p1) they broadcast the Arnold-Newman ethos at home and throughout the 'far-flung empire' (Wiener, 1992, p21). The public schools and the universities remained largely aloof from the increased interest in science and engineering generated by advances in steam machinery (Barnard, 1961, p88). The classical, Christian curriculum was proclaimed the basis of 'civilization' (Wiener, 1992, p19), the study of the classics had become a 'mark of social class' and science languished, perceived as uncomfortably close to industry and akin to 'working with one's hands' (Wiener, 1992, p19).

Victorian science and engineering

Britain's 'Open Door' free trade policy had created a virtual 'magic carpet' on which unrefined ores and raw yarns flowed into British ports to be transformed into manufactured goods for export (Smith, 1903, p24). Despite the remarkable advances of industry it took the political initiatives of the 1840's to bestow a 'truly global' status on the British economy (Stearns, 2010, p92). The combination of maritime supremacy, the gold standard and emerging technologies combined to create a unique international advantage for Britain (Trevelyan, 1922, p276).

Stearns states that progress in the transport and communications sectors is the most reliable indicator of the difference between earlier 'protoglobal patterns' and the truly global expansion of British influence after the 1840's (Stearns, 2010, p93). A measure of such progress is illustrated by the rapid development of the railways. In 1804, as a consequence of a large bet, a stationary steam driven water pump was mounted onto a wheeled carriage and successfully hauled itself and five fully loaded trucks almost ten miles (Beard, 1919, p35; Harvie & Matthew, 2000, p49). The success of the experiment turned many inventive minds to the possibility of using steam energy to 'mechanise movement' (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p67). In 1814 George Stephenson's 'travelling engine' pulled eight loaded trucks along a track that included a steep incline (Bellis, 2012).

Some sixteen engine designs and ten years later Stephenson demonstrated the 'Locomotion No 1' on the rails of the Stockton and Darlington horse drawn tramway. Locomotion completed the twelve-mile route in two hours (Beard, 1919, pp35-36). This not only established Stephenson as the first successful locomotive designer but also gave the world its commonest railway gauge, four feet eight and a half inches, the required distance between the rails for a horse to walk comfortably (Allitt, 2009, L22).

Stephenson and his son next constructed the 'Rocket' for the ambitious thirty-five mile Liverpool to Manchester route (Cross, 1920, p634). The new railway was opened in 1830 to jubilant crowds and ornate coaches filled with local and national political celebrities. Despite Liverpool MP William Huskisson misjudging the speed of an oncoming locomotive and becoming the world's first recorded railway fatality, the inaugural run was considered an engineering triumph (Lang, 2006, p262; Trevelyan, 1922, p222).

The railway went on to provide a regular service, transporting cotton and cotton goods between the Liverpool docks and the Manchester mills at the 'unprecedented speed' of fifteen miles an hour (Clark, 2007, p237). Entrepreneurs who saw the industrial and social potential of steam travel fought to buy shares in anything that ran on rails. They created a decade of 'railway mania' (Robinson, 1991, p1) in which almost two and a half thousand miles of track was laid, linking all of Britain's major cities and creating a national railway network (Harvie & Matthew, 2000, p51).

The use of steam engines in ships was developed with equal rapidity (Stearns, 2010, p93). Early paddle wheeled steam ships were unstable in heavy seas and were quickly replaced when more robust sea going vessels were required to cope with the increasing coal demands of industrialising European countries (Ville, 2008, p297). The acceleration of steamship technology was assisted, remarkably, by a lack of adequate patent protection, ship building yards were large sprawling spaces with many employees and news of successful innovations soon 'leaked' to other manufacturers (Clark, 2007, p237). By 1840 this spree of industrial espionage had created a procession of ever-larger iron-hulled vessels with screw propellers, high-pressure boilers and increased engine efficiency (Cross, 1920, p741). The first Atlantic steamship crossing in 1819 ran out of coal and finished the thirty two day voyage under sail.
Within twenty years, Samuel Cunard had trimmed the crossing to just fifteen days (Cross, 1920, p741), had founded the Cunard Steamship Company and had been contracted to carry British transatlantic mail (Stearns, 2010, p94). In 1848 the Navigation Acts, which restricted the transportation of British goods to British ships with British crews, were repealed. This greatly expanded and internationalised the British merchant shipping fleet (Ashton, 1955, p150; Scammell, 2004, p139).

Advances in steam technology were paralleled by experiments with other potential energy sources such as electricity. From the 1820's it was known that electricity travelled along a wire in 'pluses' that could be made to cause a needle to flicker. This led to speculation as to whether such a property could be utilized to create an 'instantaneous' messaging system (White, 2003). Samuel Morse, a professor in the painting department of the University of the City of New York (Gerard, 2008, p491) was the first to develop an apparatus that translated the electrical pulses into ink marks on a paper strip.

By 1835 he had improved the device to represent long and short electrical pulses as either ink dots or dashes (Curley, 2010, p53). Morse teamed up with electrical engineer, Alfred Vail and in 1844 they made an experimental 'Morse code' transmission using a single wire attached to poles over the thirty five mile distance between Washington and Baltimore (Gerard, 2008, p492). The American government adopted the project and rapidly began connecting all regions of the United States by telegraph lines. Many other countries followed this example and, although the actual brand and design of the telegraphic equipment may have varied, it was Morse and Vail's 'dot-and-dash' that became the 'worldwide standard' (White, 2003). The British government was attracted by the speed with which information could be transmitted and soon began building an Empire-wide telegraph network with wires on overland poles and insulated cables under the sea (Cross, 1920, p740).

In 1851 the first international submarine cable was laid between Dover and Calais, the practical application of which was immediately seized upon by Julius Reuter who founded his telegraph news agency in the same year (Legrain, 2003, p94). A decade later saw Britain and America connected by an Atlantic cable (Cross, 1920, p740) and by 1880 the world's oceans were criss-crossed by almost a hundred thousand miles of British telegraph cables. London was in virtually constant communication with India, Canada, Australia, Africa and Australia (Ferguson, 2003, p168). Kipling was sufficiently inspired by the concept to write of 'shell-burred cables' creeping through the 'ooze' (Kipling, 1896, pp9-10)). The British mainland telegraph system was nationalised and, although private companies developed the overseas network, the government exercised overall control through a carefully calculated programme of official subsidies (Morris, 1979, p60).

The same system of 'generous' government subsidies was employed to underwrite the private sector development of the empire's railways; huge numbers of British locomotives were exported to India because British engineers had provided the subcontinent with twenty four thousand miles of track (Ferguson, 2003, p169). The railway, the steamship and the electric telegraph allowed British industry to expand at an 'unheard-of rate' (Barker, 1910, p76). These were to be the vital elements in the development of Britain's nineteenth century globalised economy (Anastasiadou, 2007, p172).

Expansionist ambitions are revealed in the ‘railway imperialism’ that drove rails through ‘other people's countries’ eventually arriving at the grandiose station termini that still stand in many major cities (Robinson, 1991, pp1-3). Johnson wrote in 1898 that the steamships, railway and the telegraph had ‘practically annihilated distance’ (Johnson, 1898, p29). Since these advances also facilitated the rapid deployment of troops and munitions Ferguson wryly added that they correspondingly increased the possibility of ‘long-distance annihilation’ (Ferguson, 2003, p170).

The conjunction of the declaration of free trade and the spectacular advances in engineering technology allowed Britain to make a virtual ‘monopoly’ of much of the world’s trade and commerce (Barker, 1910, p76). Ferguson asks how such success could have been achieved by a small ‘archipelago of rainy islands’ off the European coast (Ferguson, 2003, pxi). A large part of Britain’s success rests on the early development of coal mining and the proximity of those mines to sources of iron ore. The manufacture of cotton goods lent itself to mechanisation, this supported the engineering sector that sprang from an abundance of coal and iron. British innovators and entrepreneurs were initially ‘luckier in their geology’ than their commercial rivals (Allen, 2011, pp381-382).

That luck was rapidly translated into commercial wealth and territorial power, ‘ringing the earth with railways and submarine cables, lending money everywhere’ and populating ‘empty places’ with settlers from home (Morris, 1979, p22). This ‘Greater Britain’ was initially managed by traders and merchants with ‘minimal parliamentary oversight’ (Pitts, 2005, p12), but it soon became obvious that if the worst excesses of the ‘corruption and ignorance that plagued colonial rule’ were to be avoided a system of civil administration was required (Pitts, 2005, p146).

Civil administration

The urgent need for an efficient colonial bureaucracy served to highlight the inadequacies that also existed at home (Hobsbawn, 1996, p191). A series of early nineteenth century legislative adjustments had separated public office holders from members of parliament (Young, 1961, p242-243), this should have made it possible to replace the existent rambling arrangement of public management with a ‘unified civil service’ (Greenaway, 2004, p11).

But systematic thinking was not welcome in a world where generations of civil employees had been recruited and promoted by a system of patronage.
A career in the British bureaucracy relied on family connections and party allegiance and was widely regarded as a safe job for the 'unambitious' (Johnson, 2002, p3), although there were always enough 'career men' with ability who despite this dubious and unfair system were able to steer governments through their essential functions (Young, 1961, p243). Such administrative ability was rarely recognised and while advancement remained subject to bribery and influence it was still possible for inappropriate candidates such as 'prize fighters and dog fanciers' to be offered lucrative positions (Hoppen, 1998, p112).

A similarly unedifying situation existed within the offices of the East India Company. Although not technically a branch of government, the Company exercised political sovereignty over the Indian subcontinent and consequently maintained a large administrative staff (Washbrook, 1997, p10). Most of these were graduates from the Company's own East India College, which it had established at Haileybury in 1809 (Kaminsky, 1996, p563). However, even college entry was heavily 'skewed in the hereditary direction' (Oakes & Parsons, 2001, p18).

Most of the Company's officers were British born and traditionally drawn from a small group of families whose fortunes and futures were so closely bound up with those of the subcontinent that they were referred to as the 'Anglo-Indians'. It was a term not commonly used to describe people of mixed race until the twentieth century (Ferguson, 2003, p197). The privileged status of these Anglo-Indians prompted Kipling to write that if in the whole of India there were only a single loaf of bread it would belong jointly to the 'Plowdens, the Trevors, the Beadons, and the Rivett-Carnacs' (Kipling, 1950, p102). This wholly British 'inscrutable clique' regarded themselves as being quite separate from the rest of British society who in turn resented the privileges assumed by the Anglo-Indian section of the British establishment known as the 'India Interest' (Thiessen, 1994, p29).

By the mid nineteenth century, the government under Prime Minister Gladstone declared that Britain's public administration must be reformed. The decision was prompted by an East India Company efficiency initiative that identified 'intellectual' and 'mechanical' administrative tasks (Young, 1961, p253) and a survey entitled 'The Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service' (Partridge, 2002, p76).

This survey had been compiled by two eminent public administrators; Sir Charles Trevelyan, who after twelve years service in the East India Company had returned to London as assistant secretary to the Treasury and Sir Stafford Northcote, Oxford scholar and Gladstone's private secretary at the Board of Trade (Young, 1961, p6; Thiessen, 1994, p40). Hailed by its opponents as a 'brilliant airing of preconceived ideas' the Northcote-Trevelyan survey presented an acceptable digest of the existing situation along with a potential solution (Hoppen, 1998, p111).

Northcote and Trevelyan recommended that the civil service should be staffed by professionals who had been recruited by competitive examination and that ability should be rewarded by promotion (Anderson, 2006, p37; Soffer, 1994, p15). Gladstone applauded these rather obvious conclusions because the examinations would require university oversight and he hoped to draw them more closely into the government services (Hoppen, 1998, p112). Chief among Gladstone's university associates was Benjamin Jowett, master of Balliol College and a 'dominating Oxford figure' (Anderson, 2006, p50).

In Jowett's view the universities were the 'spiritual home' of the professions (Anderson, 2006, p55) and he particularly encouraged students who showed an interest in 'public service and empire' (Anderson, 2006, p55). For some years Jowett had steered promising students toward the civil service where he hoped their 'Oxbridge ethos' (Vernon, 2004, p41) might eventually imbue the whole system. When Northcote and Trevelyan interviewed Jowett for their report he urged the recruitment of 'Oxbridge types' and suggested that the planned examinations be 'tailored accordingly' (Vernon, 2004, p41). Anderson suggests that Benjamin Jowett was a man with his own ideals and through his students he intended to see these permeate the governing elite (Anderson, 2006, p50).

Given Jowett's influence it was unsurprising that Northcote and Trevelyan's published findings should recommend civil service recruitment by competitive examination of a university degree standard (Anderson, 2006, p37; Seaman, 1995, p202). The universities offered the best opportunities to study for the proposed examinations and their graduates would carry the 'Oxbridge ethos' into the administrative heart of government (Vernon, 2004, p41). In his championing of the Northcote-Trevelyan recommendations Gladstone, as MP for Oxford university would be offering his constituents the opportunity to take 'command' of the upper echelons of the civil service (Hoppen, 1998, p112).

The Northcote-Trevelyan recommendations were not so enthusiastically received in all quarters (Partridge, 2002, p76). The allocation of lucrative public service posts as favour or reward was part of a long-standing, well-understood and mutually beneficial system. It was the means most often used to maintain political support and a commons majority (Seaman, 1995, p201). Politicians feared that a shift from patronage to meritocracy would upset this status quo and so refused to support the legislation (Greenaway, 2004, p3). Not prepared to let the matter rest, Sir Charles Trevelyan brought in his brother-in-law, Thomas Macaulay (Thadani, 2001). He was a well known diplomat and 'lightweight' historian and he came with an alternative plan (Fonseca, 2008). Like Trevelyan, Macaulay had strong ties with India and fervently believed that it was possible to transform Indian society into the image of Britain's own 'superior civilisation' (Washbrook, 1997, p11). He seized upon any opportunity to render this vision concrete and enthusiastically promoted English as the 'global language' (Spring, 1998, p16; Spring, 2006, p175).

The Indian Civil Service examinations

Macaulay suggested that as Gladstone had been unable to secure enough support for the Northcote-Trevelyan plan at home maybe it could be experimentally imposed on the Indian civil service (Seaman, 1995, p202; White, 1935, p1). It seemed an ideal solution. A trial run in the 'great laboratory' of far away India was agreeable to all parties (Young, 1961, p6). It would undermine the Anglo-Indian 'jobocracies' (Greenaway, 2004, p6) while providing Macaulay's proposed English-educated Indian elite with role models of 'intellectual and social distinction' (Moore, 1998, p429) who had achieved the 'highest academic honours' at the ancient universities (Thiessen, 1994, p43).

An amended and more far reaching Macaulay-Trevelyan plan was drawn up for India and quickly implemented (Thiessen, 1994, p43). The academic standing of the 'competition wallahs' as the applicants became known was not at first as high as had been predicted (Lubenow, 2000, p250). Britain's upper classes were not interested in the 'practical work' of running an empire as it was closely associated with 'trade' (Porter, 2004, p40). While the aim may have been to recruit the Oxbridge 'crème de la crème' the competitive system ultimately attracted the 'bright young sons of provincial professionals' who were prepared to study law and languages at university for an extra two years (Ferguson, 2003, pp185-186).

An overseas posting was not only prestigious but lucrative, to an 'exceptionally high' salary a civil servant might add 'decent living quarters' and the opportunity of retirement at age fifty-five (Balogh, 1955, p265). The 'competition wallahs' may not have come from the established Anglo-Indian families but they swiftly adopted their mantle of attitude and manners, exhibiting both bureaucratic caution and a 'fierce loyalty' to the Indian Civil Service (Thiessen, 1994, p42). They were charged with stabilising the public bureaucracy by building an administrative 'steel framework' that would support the civil infrastructure of the whole country (Braibanti, 1963, p3). Shils that states the framework was an 'oligarchy' created by circumstances to rule India without any of the accepted legal restrictions or controls (Shils, 1961, p90). But this relatively small core of men could not have taken responsibility for three million people (Burroughs, 1998, p177) without the cooperation of the indigenous population, many of whom carried out the 'mechanical' tasks of administration (Young, 1961, p253).

British trading and business interests were beginning to industrialise the subcontinent. Within fifty years Calcutta and Bombay would, after London, be the second and third largest cities of the empire (Washbrook, 1997, p13). For the Indian elite, a thoroughly English education held the promise of status and professional advancement and by 1857 the East India Company's principal cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, all had their own Oxbridge style university (Moore, 1998, p431). These institutions not only introduced ever-greater numbers of Indian students to British culture (Washbrook, 1997, p13) but also supervised instruction and prepared examinations for the colleges within their jurisdiction (Chambers, 1950, p509).

A ‘steady stream’ of graduates began to move on from these home grown institutions to ‘seek higher education at Oxford, Cambridge and London’ (Washbrook, 1997, p15). Shils states that the ‘modernisation’ of India’s systems of administration and higher education encouraged the emergence of political activists and gave rise to an ‘Indian intelligentsia’ (Shils, 1961, p16).

In the thirty years following their founding, India’s three universities were attended by over sixty thousand Indian students (Moore, 1998, p431). By the 1860’s four thousand of India’s ‘most talented’ graduates (Shils, 1961, p16) were employed in government service, albeit in largely subordinate administrative roles (Burroughs, 1998, p182). Twenty years later numbers had risen to eleven thousand (Moore, 1998, p432). They had been educated in British patterned universities that saw their role as creators of a new Indian class of English speaking professionals (Moore, 1998, p431). Students who graduated from Calcutta, Bombay or Madras had been encouraged to aspire to ‘Western ambitions’ (Burroughs, 1998, p182) but were intended to fill those minor administrative roles that either lacked prestige or were not ‘sufficiently lucrative’ for the British (Harris & Willis, 2003 p221). It was the system of education that had been advocated by Thomas Macaulay, the ‘architect of Colonial Britain's Educational Policy in India’ (Thadani, 2001) and was implemented with the stated aim of creating a ‘nation of brown Englishmen’ (Washbrook, 1997, p13).

Although large numbers of the indigenous population eventually worked within the bureaucratic system very few became fully fledged civil servants; those who did found their presence ‘unwelcome’ and promotion slow (Burroughs, 1998, p182). Indians were able to apply to sit the Civil Service competitive examinations and although these were held in London enough enthusiastic Indian candidates arrived to ‘make their presence felt’ in the metropolis (Washbrook, 1997, p15). Not all were destined for the civil service, there were others who studied law or medicine but most on their return to India as ‘brown Englishmen’ found that they faced resentment (Griffiths, 1952, p261; Shils, 1961, p93). Despite the ‘hatred or admiration’ that a civil service career might bring with it, there was never a shortage of Indian applicants (Braibanti, 1963, p3). But they did have to wait until 1869 before the first of their number was accepted into the civil service proper and by the century’s end only another thirty-two had been recruited (Shils, 1961, p16; Moore, 1998, p429).

But of the many who had a western style education with its ideas of ‘nationalism and liberal democracy’ a few began to question British rule and to develop an interest and an aptitude for politics (Lumby, 1962, p87). The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and maintained a permanent committee in London to better lobby for Indian national participation in the civil service and ‘representative rights’ (Washbrook, 1997, p15).

Determined to maintain and if possible increase the number of British ‘gentlemen scholars’ appointed to the Indian Civil Service the examination board reduced the lower age limit for candidates to nineteen in 1876 (Moore, 1998, p429). After selection, these candidates were required to spend two years ‘finishing’ their education at university. Oxford, by 1880 became home to two-thirds of the probationers with Jowett’s Balliol College specialising in preparation for the Indian Civil Service, the ‘blue riband of the Victorian competitive system’ (Anderson, 2006, p51). This ‘social pattern’ was to become the accepted order of the Indian Civil Service and would be ‘still easily recognisable in 1940' (Porter, 2004, p40).

A British civil service

Competitive recruitment for the Indian civil service started in 1853, and corruption and incompetence had been significantly reduced (Moore, 1998, p429). Gladstone and his political allies saw this success as an opportunity to reform both the British administrative and higher education systems in tandam. Gladstone declared, in 1854, that competitive recruitment for the British civil service could now be introduced at home (Moore, 1998, p429). Their ‘spectacularly ambitious’ (Vernon, 2004, p41) hopes were for civil service examinations that would encourage the reform of Oxford and Cambridge and ‘reshape’ the public schools. They were intent on the creation of a ‘public service bourgeoisie’ (Anderson, 2006, p51) and a ‘closer nexus’ between the universities and government service (Hoppen, 1998, p111). This applied particularly to overseas government service where due to the continuing ‘globalisation of the international power-game’ large numbers of British civil servants and diplomats were engaged in maintaining the European balance of power, while Britain drew ‘the rest of the globe’ into its trading and economic network (Hobsbawn, 1987, p315). However, implementation of this ‘massive piece of Victorian social engineering’ was to be dogged by delay (Anderson, 2006, p37).

The most vocal objectors being those who had benefited from the years of nepotism and now would only accept a ‘much diluted’ version of Northcote-Trevelyan proposals (White, 1935, p1). The process was further interrupted by a war against Russia in the Crimea. It was this military action, which conclusively revealed ‘administrative incompetence on a massive scale’ and underscored the urgent need for civil service reform (Kelsall et al, 1955, p1).

The Northcote-Trevelyan recommendations finally gained Parliamentary approval in 1870. The British civil service was at last to become an organisation of 'full-time, salaried officials’ recruited from the 'elite of the universities’ (Kelsall et al, 1955, p2). The entrance examinations would continue to be modeled on Oxbridge degrees so the only ‘existing agency’ to tutor candidates would remain the universities (Soffer, 1994, p15). This created a ‘shifting interdependency’ between those inside the universities who enjoyed the autonomy that came with their position as providers of administrators to the Empire (Vernon, 2004, p47) and those on the outside who felt that the universities could ‘do more for the nation’ (Hughes, 1919, p154). But the universities had developed an advantageous relationship with the British administrators and the Indian civil service, which became the largest employer of Oxbridge graduates (Hoppen, 1998, p112). Public service became a ‘new rationale’ and Oxford and Cambridge universities were able to re-establish a classical education as the route to the ‘centre’s of power' (Anderson, 2006, p37).

Victorian and Edwardian elite education was shaped by the legacies of Arnold and Newman (Barnett, 1987, p214). Their educational philosophies may not have been intended to ‘manufacture’ a new imperial administrative class with 'fine and governing qualities' (Wiener, 1992, p16) but the values that they and their followers impressed upon their pupils were ‘particularly attuned’ to the responsibilities of duty to the empire (Paxman, 2011, p62). They became the imperial ‘prefects’ who did not question authority and always tried to do the ‘right thing’ in the certain conviction ‘that all else was second best' (Morris, 1979, p220). Judd argues that although 'fair play' and 'decent behavior' were universally expected of the officials of empire, the only ‘genuine bond’ was provided by the ‘old school tie’ (Judd, 1996, p143).

Although colonial civil service candidates hoping to work in Malaya, Hong Kong or Ceylon were subject to the same examinations as those bound for India a ‘quiet word in the right quarter’ could still secure a post in one of the ‘lesser tropical colonies’ (Morris, 1979, p186). The officers of the Colonial Office, who represented the British government throughout the empire, were a separate body from the civil service departments. They came from that same ‘stratum of society’ that had been ‘stamped to a pattern’ by an education at public school and Oxbridge (Morris, 1979, p185) but were selected by interview rather than examination.

Colonial Office ‘spies’ maintained close contacts with Oxbridge dons who recommended graduates who displayed ‘reliability’ rather than ‘cleverness’ (Paxman, 2011, p63). Paxman argues that sport was vital to the building of character for Britain’s overseas administrative and government officials, being in a team, playing by the rules and not questioning the umpire or referee were all elements ‘which spoke of the imperial design’ (Paxman, 2011, p62). The concept of ‘muscular Christianity’ as a ‘chivalric code’ (Krebs, 2004, p92) grew from university sports and the image of the wholesome but devout student who excelled at everything (Judd, 1996, p143). The idea of ‘muscular Christianity’ was brought to popular attention by Thomas Hughes who used it as a theme in his 1861 Tom Brown sequel, ‘Tom Brown at Oxford’ (Watson et al, 2005). ‘Muscular Christianity’ when combined with the total experience of sport, school and university was believed to ideally prepare graduates who would go on to ‘govern a quarter of the world's landmass’ (Oakes & Parsons, 2001, p16).

An exhibition of globalisation

Along with international financial success and political stability came pioneering industrial progress and the desire to show it off (Thackeray & Findling, 2002, p93). 1851 saw a sparklingly structure erected in London’s Hyde Park as the venue for the first ever ‘worlds’ fair’ (Tyack, 2000). The spectacular combination of four and a half tons of iron and over three hundred thousand glass panes (Hibbert, 2000, p213) was dubbed the ‘Crystal Palace’ by Douglas Jerrold writing in Punch magazine (Proudman, 2008, p285). Designed by Joseph Paxton, supervisor of the gardens at Chatsworth House (Lang, 2006, p298), this vast greenhouse was at that time the ‘largest enclosed space on earth’ (Tyack, 2000).

The building illustrated Britain's industrial and engineering superiority as well as promising a prosperous future to any other country prepared to adopt a policy of 'peace and free trade' (Porter, 2004, p91). Dunckley states that the Crystal Palace was literally a monument to free trade because without the lifting of the prohibitive import duty on glass it could never have been built (Dunckley, 1896, p40).

Officially titled the 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations' the display was to be a measure of the status of the empire. Europe had seen national trade shows and conventions before but no country had previously 'dared' to show the products of its industry alongside those of its rivals (Porter, 2004, p91). The project has since been trumpeted as the idea of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, but Thackeray and Findling argue that it was more likely launched by leading members of the Royal Society of Arts who then 'drew' Prince Albert into their scheme (Thackeray & Findling, 2002, pp95-96). The Prince may not have been deeply involved with the planning but he did play an active part in raising funds (Tyack, 2000). Since the free traders among the organisers wanted to promote the commercial and industrial possibilities of a world without government intervention they could hardly expect the money from the public purse (Porter, 2004, p91).

Half the exhibition space was to be crammed with the 'wealth and exoticism' of Britain's imperial realm (Reynolds, 2002, p99), while the other half would exhibit works from Europe, the United States of America and the 'distant nations' of the Ottoman Empire and China (Cohn, 2010, p1). The displays were artfully arranged so as to emphasise British 'industrial achievement' and the 'great global range' of its overseas possessions (Stearns, 2010, p98). Auerbach argues that the exhibition 'domesticated the empire'; literally bringing home the idea that many other countries 'belonged' to the family (Auerbach 1999, p101). It was this notion of 'internationalism' that appealed to Prince Albert (Auerbach 1999, p161); by lending the project his support he could be 'visibly useful' in a way that his German origins might be an asset (Thackeray & Findling, 2002, p96). At fund raising event in March 1850, he spoke of his hope that imperial expansion would lead to the 'realization of the unity of mankind' (Prince Albert, 1858, p60).

Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels mischievously dubbed the event the ‘Great Examination’, and prophetically added the globalising comment that international industrial methods were ‘demolishing national barriers and increasingly blurring local peculiarities of production, society and national character among all peoples’ (Marx & Engels, 1850).

The Great Exhibition was officially opened on May 1st 1851, the ticket price during the first three weeks was a hefty five shillings, for the next eighteen weeks the price was reduced, but still expensive at one shilling (Thackeray & Findling, 2002, p98). However, this did not prevent six million people, approximately twenty percent of the British population (Reynolds, 2002, p101), from visiting the world’s ‘first international industrial display’ (Young, 2008, p4). For many visitors a trip to the Crystal Palace was the furthest they had ever travelled and the new railways were at the heart of this first example of ‘mass tourism’ (Reynolds, 2002, p101). Thomas Cook, the ‘booking clerk of the empire’ (Morris, 1979, p64) organised ‘exhilarating’ one-day tours that returned ‘trippers’ over night to work in the morning (Harvie & Matthew, 2000, p64).

The exhibition was a ‘validation of free trade’s new world order’ and an open declaration of Britain’s international ambitions (Young, 2008, p5). It succeeded in depicting Britain as the economic centre around which revolved all other ‘dependent’ or ‘complementary’ economies (Auerbach 2008, pxi). The juxtaposition of exhibits and spaces revealed an ‘easily digestible framework’ of British political thinking on the future hierarchy and design of the ‘global community’ (Cohn, 2010, p8). The Crystal Palace finally closed its doors in October, and the enterprise was acclaimed a ‘triumph’ (Hibbert, 2000, p214). In a post exhibition lecture the Reverend Whewell was moved to prophesy that the public had been introduced to a wealth of innovations that would ultimately ‘annihilate space and time’ (Whewell, 1852, p11).

The exhibition marked a high point in Victorian ‘power and self-confidence’ and although the empire would continue to expand this would be the last time that British claims of ‘global technological and economic’ supremacy would go unchallenged (Proudman, 2008, p286). Prince Albert was aware that his adopted country was in danger of losing its manufacturing superiority to ‘more carefully educated nations’ (Sheppard, 1975, p77).

He had studied at the Humboldtian University of Bonn and was a keen advocate of ‘systematic education’ and research into technical processes (Sheppard, 1975, p77). Albert directed that the substantial profits generated by the Exhibition should be used to purchase property in Kensington, adjacent to the Crystal Palace site (Harvie & Matthew, 2000, p64). The intention was to create a permanent legacy of the exhibition in a network of institutions whose central aim would be to apply ‘science and art’ to technical and industrial education (Sheppard, 1975, p74). The first institutional arrival was the Science and Art Department of the Board of Trade, eventually simply referred to as ‘South Kensington’ (Barnard, 1961, p135). The rest of the network followed and ‘Albertopolis’ has since become home to the Victoria and Albert, the Natural History and the Science Museums as well as Imperial College, the Royal Colleges of Art, Music and Mines and the Royal Albert Hall (Paxman, 2011, p39).

The South Kensington institutions continued the process of art, science and design education that had been begun in 1851 with an approach that combined elements of German educational theory and traditional British ‘pragmatism’ (Sheppard, 1975, p74). Prince Albert’s initiative in using technical education to bring science, art and design to industry (Sheppard, 1975, p74) was cut short by his untimely death in 1861. At that time the provision of English higher education rested with the South Kensington institutions, the ancient Oxbridge universities, various regional colleges with a ‘clear scientific and technical’ mission and two newer universities in London and Durham (Larson, 1977, p94).

Durham University and the colleges

In 1830, the Chapter of Durham Cathedral was one of the country’s wealthiest ecclesiastical bodies (Roberts, 1947, p38). Fearful that some of its 'surplus' wealth might be diverted to London, the Chapter determined that it should be used to promote religion and 'sound learning’ (Anderson, 2006, p28; Roberts, 1947, p38). An 1831 application for an Act of Parliament to permit an ‘academical institution’ was approved (Knight, 1838, p219) and Durham Castle was appropriated as a suitable campus for the newly titled ‘University College’ (Roberts, 1947, p39). Confirmed and endowed in 1834, the new university authorities soon received their royal charter and degree awarding status (Anderson, 2006, p28; Roberts, 1947, p38).

Durham intended to emulate the London Universities by appealing to students of 'limited means' (Barnard, 1961, p124) but it did also offer Oxbridge style residential study (Silver, 2003, p4). Student applications were swift and numerous, demonstrating that the demand for higher education 'at reasonable rates' was as strong in the north of the country as it was in its capital (Barnard, 1961, p124). This initial success was not to last. The university had been conceived as a 'shadowy replica' of Oxbridge (Silver, 2003, p65) and the 1860 completion of a reliable national rail network meant that prospective students were able to by-pass Durham and attend the 'real thing' (Anderson, 2006, p73). Even the acceptance of non-Anglicans failed to make much difference to recruitment and Durham was to remain the smallest university in England until the early twentieth century (Sanderson, 1988, p93).

The founding of Durham University served to encourage the ambitious officials of Britain's larger industrial towns and cities. Manchester had no wealthy religious foundation but the 'forest of chimneys' that turned its sky to an 'inky canopy' (Taylor, 1842, p3) had generated a 'new elite' of merchants and manufacturers (Armytage, 1955, p186). They sought better higher education both for its own sake and for their industries. From as early as 1829 prominent Manchester merchants had been trying to transform a variety of educational foundations into more prestigious institutions (Armytage, 1955, p186). But the plans came to nothing until in 1846 local entrepreneur and philanthropist John Owens died.

Owens had been a giant in the cotton yarn business. He was a local trader who had become an international businessman with partnerships in China and America (Armytage, 1955, p187). He did not marry or have children but he did amass a fortune. Owens left just over one hundred thousand pounds to establish a new college in Manchester. Owens' bequest laid down rigid conditions; the college was to be free of any kind of religious testing for students or staff and it was to teach those subjects that were 'usual in universities' (Sanderson, 1988, p91). This less ecclesiastical version of Newman's ideal of a liberal education became widely adopted during the latter half of the nineteenth century and often diverted religious zeal toward more 'patriotic goals' (Soffer, 1994, p18).

Owens College was granted a warrant to forward qualifying students for the University of London external examinations and opened to students in October 1851 (Tribe, 1993, p186).

The college was ambitious from the first with a programme of both daytime and evening classes; it was even an early leader in teacher training (Patrick, 1986, p244). John Owens was by no means alone in his desire to promote higher education; it was to become something of a fashion among well-heeled industrialists. The educational foundations of a pair of steel manufacturers were eventually merged into Sheffield University, a college founded by the world's leading maker of pen nibs became Birmingham University, while Reading University was largely arranged by the Palmer half of the Huntley and Palmer biscuit company (Sanderson, 1988, p91). Henry Hartley, a wealthy but eccentric wine merchant of Southampton died in the same year as Owens and likewise left a fortune to be used for educational purposes. However Hartley's wishes were unclear and the will was contested. Lawyers managed to whittle the hundred thousand pound bequest down to forty thousand with which the Southampton authorities were just able to fund the rather modest Hartley Institute (Vernon, 2004, p105).

Confusion over benefactors wishes and clashes with local authorities were not uncommon and educational facilities provided with only a launch fund did not always flourish (Vernon, 2004, p105). Sanderson states that it was often the 'kiss of death' for a college to named after a local businessman, as industrial competitors would ignore an institution emblazoned with the name of a rival company or product (Sanderson, 1988, p91). The promising start made by Owens proved to be no more than that, the college floundered. Within ten years of opening it was considered a failure (Tribe, 1993, p186). The problem lay in Owens wish to create an institution that attempted to provide a liberal Oxbridge education (Sanderson, 1988, p91). The classics and mathematics proved of little interest to the middle and working classes in provincial cities where a 'more strictly vocational imperative ruled' (Tribe, 1993, p186). Owens College managed to stay open on the strength of its popular evening classes until new benefactors were found. Specialist lawyers applied a little 'legal sleight of hand' and altered the terms of Owens bequest that related to liberal education (Vernon, 2004, p98). An appeal for funds was made to the citizens of Manchester and they generously contributed over two hundred thousand pounds to the revamped project (Barnes, 1996, p276). By 1871 the college, with a new constitution and new premises had been 'virtually refounded' (Anderson, 2006, p73) and in this new guise was able to set about consolidating 'its position as the premier provincial institution' (Vernon, 2004, p98).

Most of the civic institutions and colleges were modeled on University College, London in that they were 'secular, open to both sexes' and offered a broad range of teaching in 'classical and modern subjects' (Tribe, 1993, p186). This more widely accessible education was seldom the result of 'parliamentary interest' (Anderson, 2006, p73) but was more often created by local civic authorities to answer 'regional industrial needs' (Sanderson, 1999, p162).

Although civic foundations were most commonly found in industrial cities their curricula were not exclusively scientific or technical; many still promoted a background in the classics for which they looked to Oxford or Cambridge extension classes (Anderson, 2006, p73). The English 'university extension movement' was started in 1873 by Cambridge University and aimed to make its lectures and culture available throughout the country (Halsey, 1992, p34). Once the service had proved popular Oxford University joined, and also provided travelling lecturers. The two universities liaised in what became the world's first 'systematic' scheme for extramural university level education for adults (Goldman, 1995, p11).

The curricula of the best civic colleges ranged from Oxbridge taught classics to local expertise in science and technology, and all within the teaching structure required by the University of London external examinations board. It is no surprise that the 'most ambitious' and most successful of the colleges were soon considering making applications for 'independent university status' (Vernon, 2004, p93). It was Owens College that first had the 'audacity' to apply for a charter to become England's fifth university (Silver, 2003, p4). The application raised questions about the maintenance of academic standards and the total to which the number of English universities could be safely multiplied (Flexner, 1930, p247). There were also some doubts that a sophisticated institution like a university could exist within the 'hellish confines' of Britain's industrial centres (Vernon, 2004, p94). Government ministers examined every aspect of the application then suggested a compromise. Using a similar mechanism to that which had 'solved' the rival ambitions of University College and King's College in London, Owens College would not be granted a charter of its own but would become the first constituent member of a new 'examining university for the north' (Anderson, 2006, p74). Despite the obvious 'timidity' of this decision it gained sufficient support for Owens to become the federal institution that was renamed Victoria University in 1880 (Silver, 2003, p15).

Just a year later Liverpool College became the second member of the new universities (Flexner, 1930, p247). The constituent institutions of Victoria University retained their own local management, this allowed more curricula control than had been permitted by London University (Vernon, 2004, p69) and encouraged relatively 'small student bodies' (Anderson, 2006, p74) to achieve high academic standards.

The increasing numbers of colleges within industrial provincial cities did much to raise the standard of higher education; intercity rivalry and 'civic pride' were satisfied by a commitment to continuing improvements (Vernon, 2004, p93). Yorkshire acquired its College of Science as a 'direct response' (Sanderson, 1999, p161) to the very poor showing of British engineering at the 1867 Paris Exhibition (Powell, 1965, p105). A subsequent Paris exhibition in the 1889 further demonstrated the industrial rise of Britain's Continental rivals. An impressive array of engineering and chemical progress was presented beneath an especially designed marvel of structural steel - the Eiffel Tower (Sanderson, 1999, p165).

The production of steel had become an economic 'virility symbol' and during the 1880's the output of both America and Germany began to overtake that of British steel manufacture (Sanderson, 1999, p165). Alford states that this 'slight' industrial eclipse should not be taken as an indication of a reduced sphere of influence (Alford, 1999, pp86-87). Britain was still the 'richest of nations' with a sound economy based on exports, insurance, banking, international shipping, foreign investments and the largest gold reserves in Europe (Morris, 1979, p60).

Laissez-faire, national wealth and free trade

Britain owed the strength of its economy to its overseas territorial possessions and a wide range of technological advances. Although both were initiated by commercial ambition they resulted in an international trading empire that provides substantial evidence of globalisation in the nineteenth century (Legrain, 2003, p89). Although the British government of the period was prepared to support virtually any measure that extended the 'free play of the market' it was reluctant to accept any further responsibility (Platt, 1968, p298).

The official policy in dealing with matters of trade and finance was one of strict nonintervention, almost ‘overwhelmingly laissez-faire’ (Platt, 1968, p298). The 1870-1913 ‘free trade era of laissez-faire’ so closely resembles contemporary globalisation that it convincingly counters claims for the current phenomena being a novelty (Went, 2002, p10). However, Micklethwait and Wooldridge argue while the globalisation of the period may have been impressive it does not compare with more modern levels of integration in capital markets and the exchange of services (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p5). Giddens likewise states that the modern globally integrated economy had no ‘parallels in earlier times’ (Giddens, 2002, p9). Britain’s nineteenth century free trade area was not as advanced as today’s globalisation but this does not contradict the view that the process has been slowly advancing throughout ‘earlier periods of history’ (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p28).

Legrain argues that British politicians of the nineteenth century adopted free trade as a ‘political choice’ and did see a globally integrated market for both commerce and culture as a viable goal (Legrain, 2003, p89). This vision was supported by the knowledge that the universities could be relied upon to provide that ‘fusion of aristocratic and professional values’ (Wiener, 1992, p23) which administrative officers were thought to require ‘to run a world empire’(Callinicos, 2006, p24). The difficulty with such free market ambitions was convincing other countries to follow suit (Legrain, 2003, p89). Generous trade agreements were negotiated with willing participants while reluctance was subjected to ‘gunboat diplomacy’ (Legrain, 2003, p91). Britain’s dependant colonies were pressured to accept what Cain identifies as ‘Free Trade Imperialism’ while some ‘smaller or weaker’ countries only signed after being reminded of Britain’s naval supremacy (Cain, 1999, p3). It was a process that began to blend the ‘military, political, economic, and cultural’ thinking of previously remote parts of the world (Clark, 1998, p36). The nineteenth century’s free trade idealists viewed the homogenising effect of this global transformation as a ‘guaranteed’ method of improving living standards of ‘everyone’ everywhere (Davies, 2005, p56). Much of this vision was ultimately corrupted for the sake of commercial and military expedience, not all living standards were improved, and not all peoples welcomed free trade. There would have been no ‘globalisation without gunboats’ (Ferguson, 2003, pxx).

Most of Europe, initially at least, did sign up to a new 'wave of commercial treaties' that pledged to follow the principles of an international free market (O'Rourke, 2000, p457). Countries that had previously levied duties of up to fifty percent now entered into an era of cooperation that that would reduce import charges to about ten percent. The 'utopia of international free trade' appeared to be just 'around the corner' (Price, 1999, p91). In 1870 the international banking community was discussing the possibility of a 'European central bank' with a common 'European currency' (Rothschild, 1999, p106).

The possibility of closer political and economic ties between the British and their continental cousins was being promoted in Britain by W. T. Stead's 'Pall Mall Gazette' (Ferguson, 2003, p258). The prevailing spirit of optimism even extended to British landowners and farmers whose predicted financial doom had been postponed. In the wake of the Corn Law repeal the amount of cheaper foreign wheat available for import was insufficient to pose an immediate threat and it would be some years before transporting grain from the giant cereal growing regions of America and the Ukraine would become financially viable. Many landowners saw the delay as an opportunity to adjust their crop production and cultivation methods. They took a renewed interest in improved farming techniques that in turn created confidence and investment in the development and manufacture of agricultural machinery. Not all imports were unpopular with farmers; the wide use of fertilizer during the 1850s required the import of one hundred thousand tons of guano annually (McCord, 1991, p329; Howe, 1997, p194).

The increase in imported food, and newly mechanised farming methods meant that less people were required to work on the land. This drop in agricultural employment was offset by an increased demand for workers in industrial towns. The nation was in transformation, its 'future lay in commerce rather than in agriculture' (Trevelyan, 1922, p204). Cheaper imported food was more widely available in the developing urban centres than in the countryside. This encouraged a population shift to the better-fed townships and their 'guarantee of working-class welfare' (Howe, 1997, p194). Most of Britain's population were enjoying a marked increase in prosperity which was largely based on an 'uncritical' acceptance of free trade and a growing reliance on foreign food imports (McCord, 1991, p329).

Although Britain maintained a healthy ‘margin of safety’ economic observers were aware that it could no longer be taken for granted (McCord, 1991, p437). For too long British industry had relied on traditional and outmoded processes and methods and was slowly being overtaken by ‘better educated foreign competitors’ (Sheppard, 1975, p75). Higher education in the English colleges was being expanded to meet this challenge but it had initially been very slow (Vernon, 2004, p28). Increasing numbers of students could study an increasing range of subjects; science, history, linguistics and philosophy had recently been joined by biology and astronomy (Butts, 1955, p395).

The teachers, tutors and scientists who supported this extension into 'modern' subjects were attuned to the changes in the nature of knowledge (Vernon, 2004, p28). One of the great challenges to the 'Aristotelian tradition’ was Charles Darwin's ‘On The Origin of Species’, published in 1859. The theory of evolution sparked an intellectual argument that in twenty years had acquired the status of a movement; it questioned accepted knowledge and was a significant factor in releasing ‘learning’ from its rigid traditions (Reiser, 1958, p41).

Oxbridge accepts ‘reforms’

However, Oxford and Cambridge Universities had the Aristotelian tradition at their very core, a position left ‘undisturbed’ by the changes that industrialisation brought to the rest of society (Powicke, 1947, p244). This aloofness did not go unnoticed by Parliament, the press or even the public; the expectation was that Oxbridge should adapt and contribute to prevailing conditions (Soffer, 1994, p14). The universities countered with the familiar argument that their traditional ‘liberal arts education’ was deemed to improve the mind and strengthen character, and that this was how they best served the nation (Soffer, 1994, p14). This apparent lack of enthusiasm for change resulted in the Oxbridge institutions being subjected to two investigations by Royal Commission. The first, in 1850, recommended that both institutions should be left to reform themselves (Barnard, 1961, p123). The second, twenty years later, discovered that they had not done so (Soffer, 1994, p5).

The authorities of both ancient universities agreed to attend an inquiry, which they conceded could be conducted in English rather than Latin (Barnard, 1961, p123).

Both institutions were confident that, over the centuries, they had gathered enough obscure ecclesiastical bylaws to stave off almost any legal challenge (Vernon, 2004, p9). While the universities organised examinations and conferred degrees it was the colleges that controlled the money (Vernon, 2004, p12). All attempts to extend the Oxbridge curriculum to include 'essential' science tuition and new laboratories were doomed because the colleges would refuse to pay (Vernon, 2004, p31). The Oxbridge authorities knew they would have to accept some level of reform so they listened and discussed and then 'quietly rejected' those most injurious to their 'essential interests' (Soffer, 1994, p16). They did however, accept a recommendation for the removal of religious restrictions (Vernon, 2004, p28).

The abolition of the Test Act was the first step in reducing the influence of the church in the Oxbridge institutions. Orthodox theology was being assailed on biblical matters by questions that arose from Darwinism and the study of paleontology and geology. 'Religious doubts grew among the Victorian intelligentsia' (Anderson, 2006, p45). Both Oxford and Cambridge universities abandoned 'compulsory ordination and celibacy' which they recognized as an obstruction in attracting qualified professional teaching staff (Anderson, 2006, p46). The universities knew from the outset that they had little to fear from the commission. The views of Oxbridge, church and state were virtually indistinguishable and the government was unlikely to impose harsh restrictions on an area of 'its own authority' (Vernon, 2004, p10)

The Oxbridge universities agreed to continue making such 'adjustments' to their methods as would not interfere with the style of liberal education which they had successfully developed into a 'licensing system' for entry into the upper echelons of society (Soffer, 1994, p5). Oxbridge graduates not only 'monopolised the dominant positions in public and private life' but also throughout the British Empire (Soffer, 1994, p1). Britain's state bureaucracy, its home and overseas civil service were now staffed by the 'Christian gentlemen' of Arnold and Newman. Barnett argues that the 'liberal-studies lobby' had created a governing élite with more inclination toward 'cautious' fair play than in taking innovative action (Barnett, 1987, pp215-216). It was a hierarchy which bound the universities and the public schools into an even 'closer association' bestowing on each the glow of 'peculiar prestige' (Powicke, 1947, p244).

The public schools themselves operated within ‘narrow social and intellectual limits’ (Anderson, 2006, p32) and like the universities maintained a curriculum that was ‘unaffected by contemporary progress’ (Barnard, 1961, p126). Most public school teachers were Oxbridge educated, so themselves were already imbued with Oxbridge ‘values’ (Anderson, 2006, p32). Anderson argues that the closer ties with the public schools did little to ‘broaden university access’ and even less to ‘weaken the dominance of the classics’ but did guarantee the supply of suitable university candidates from the new middle class (Anderson, 2006, p43). It was this clientele that ultimately pressured the universities to consider a more ‘modern’ approach than that which might be found within the ‘embrace of the church’ (Anderson, 2006, p34).

Oxbridge managed to apply enough reforms to temporarily satisfy their critics without incurring any serious reduction of ‘social prestige’ (Anderson, 2006, p49). By the end of the nineteenth century natural science subjects had achieved some limited acceptance, enough for the public schools to also start taking some science seriously (Sanderson, 1999, p157). The Oxbridge universities were even prepared to tolerate some vocational training as long as it could be cloaked in the ‘gentlemanly guise’ of a profession that was unconnected with ‘industry and moneymaking' (Anderson, 2006, p49). The ancient universities had little time for the grubby pursuits of industrialists and businessmen who in turn could see ‘little relevance’ in a curriculum based on classical literature, philosophy and language (Vernon, 2004, p96). For most commercial employers an Oxford or Cambridge education appeared to be an expensive diversion that simply kept young men from starting a ‘productive life’ (Vernon, 2004, p96).

The colleges strive to become universities

Although most mechanical innovations were developed in the workshop rather than the classroom, there was an acknowledged need for more formal technical education (Anderson, 2006, p25). This was reflected in the founding of a further six colleges in the midlands and the north of England between 1871 and 1881 (Roderick & Stephens, 1974, p41). Although the government was aware of the poor showing by British manufacturers at international exhibitions they played no part in the development of colleges. Instead they relied on local industrialists and businessmen to put up the funds and find suitable management (Barnard, 1961, p126).

Institutions were founded with bequests, endowments, corporate and commercial sponsorship during the late nineteenth century's ‘flush of mercantile and industrial opulence' (Armytage, 1954, p305).

Many of the students at civic colleges faced considerable difficulty in successfully completing a degree course (Roderick & Stephens, 1974, p44). In part this was the need for working class artisans to actually be working, but it was also because many students simply had not received elementary, or secondary education of a sufficient standard as to support the ‘superstructure’ of extended technical education (Barnard, 1961, p91). By the mid 1890’s some elementary and secondary schools were very slowly beginning to benefit from Prince Albert’s Science and Art Department. The teaching of science and technology throughout the country was encouraged by the system of funding known as the 'South Kensington grants'. Money was available to both elementary and secondary schools that complied with the department’s conditions for the teaching of technical subjects (Roach, 1991, p115; Barnard, 1961, p136). Roach argues that together with other agencies, the Science and Art Department managed to run what amounted to a ‘publicly financed’ national, though ‘uncoordinated’, system of secondary education that greatly enhanced the work of the civic colleges (Roach, 1991, p246). To encourage enrollments many colleges began offering a variety of non-degree courses, which required less study time but were in line with local needs. These often proved more popular than the courses for a full degree (Roderick & Stephens, 1974, p44).

Although college’s courses might range from engineering and chemistry to skills and crafts not all offered the whole range or to the same standard. Such differences were usually dependent upon local circumstances and funding (Roderick & Stephens, 1974, p42). The founding of the colleges may have been spurred by a local need for trained labour but as ambitions to provide university level education rose, so did the cost (Vernon, 2004, p94). Traditional sources could either not afford, or did not want to meet the required increases and there were not enough willing ‘merchant princes' to make up the shortfall (Armytage, 1954, p305).

This shortage of funds was not restricted to provincial colleges; Kings College London was also in dire straits. The college’s prestigious London site, a ‘gift’ from the King, had come with the ‘burdensome’ proviso that the monumental river frontage designed by Sir William Chambers be completed (Dowland, 1997, p55).

Donations and subscriptions had initially kept Kings College adequately funded, but by the 1870's the council of the college had to admit that they could not raise the 'sizeable sum' required for the river front wall (Dowland, 1997, p56). A series of appeals did little to alleviate the situation and in 1894 the college was forced to apply for public funds. Kings was still essentially an all-Anglican college but could only acquire grants from the Treasury or London County Council by abandoning its 'religious exclusiveness' and religious testing. This was reluctantly agreed (Dowland, 1997, p56).

Flexner states that the expansion of higher education opportunities in a broader range of subjects was an 'amazing achievement' (Flexner, 1930, p247). It constituted Britain's first line of defence against the 'rapid growth' of Continental industrial rivals (Sanderson, 1999, p165). The government's laissez-faire policy had allowed most of this growth to occur without official sanction or guidance (Anderson, 2006, p73). The state had founded the Royal School of Mines and the Royal College of Science and only they received government financial support. The philanthropic industrialists who had founded and managed the civic colleges complained that government funding was also needed further north where the educational facilities were closer to the 'major centres of industry' (Roderick & Stephens, 1974, p56). It had become accepted that university level training, education and research was a national asset whose future should not be threatened by a lack of funds. In 1889 though still without much enthusiasm it was agreed that the Treasury should provide a 'crucial lifeline' in the form of grants in aid (Vernon, 2004, p94).

This was the beginning of the English higher education 'two-tier hierarchy' in which state-aided provincial institutions aspired to match the 'social and intellectual prestige' of the national and very independent Oxbridge institutions (Anderson, 2006, p65). The competition was unfair from the outset. Local colleges were unlikely to recruit from the public schools or to even compete socially with the ancient universities (Schwarz, 2004, p946). But to qualify for public funding the colleges did have to compete at an academic level so a team of observers from Oxford and Cambridge universities were recruited to oversee the quality of the colleges' curricula (Vernon, 2004, p94).

The civic colleges rose to the occasion. As the nineteenth century drew to its close most were producing educational programmes that the 'Oxbridge inspectors' recognised as being of university level (Vernon, 2004, p94). The colleges had raised their standards and offered new courses that further stretched already meagre resources. Some of the colleges still attracted donations and endowments from local business and industry but these were not sufficiently consistent to qualify as 'day-to-day income' (Drummond, 1998, p248). Several London colleges came under the auspices of the City and Guilds Institute and were funded by the appropriate livery companies (Armytage, 1957, p67) but the colleges in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield received funding from central government. To qualify for further state aid these colleges were expected to accept additional educational responsibilities until they were universities in all but name (Vernon, 2004, p94).

It was a situation some felt should be rectified. In July of 1898 a campaign was launched to gain university status for the city of Birmingham's Mason College of Science (Drummond, 1998, p247). The college had been opened in 1880, with a £150,000 gift from Sir Josiah Mason for the establishment of an institution of practical science (Roderick & Stephens, 1974, p41; McCord, 1991, p333). Mason had started life as a street hawker who landed a job in a factory where his invention of a machine to make split key rings provided the foundation for a financial empire (McCord, 1991, p332). A practical self made man who saw no merit in a 'mere literary education', he had seen Owens College come to the brink of failure and was determined that his would be an industrial training institution. He wanted 'no truck' with imitations of Oxbridge (Sanderson, 1988, p92). Theology was simply banned (Anderson, 2006, p77). Mason died a year after his college was opened though doubtless he would have taken pleasure in the support rallied by worthies like the Birmingham Higher Education Association as his institution prepared a bid for university status (Vernon, 2004, p130).

The campaign was spearheaded by Birmingham Member of Parliament, Joseph Chamberlain (Drummond, 1998, p247). He had been a local businessman and a very successful mayor of Birmingham before moving onto Westminster and an appointment as Secretary of State for the Colonies (Cohen, 1997, p122).

A number of ‘disparate groups’ had been campaigning for a city university for some years but the support of a political celebrity with many local connections was required to coordinate the proposal (Drummond, 1998, p258; Soffer, 1994, p29). Chamberlain launched a university fund and painted a vague picture of an autonomous foundation that would ‘incorporate postgraduate education’ and secure tenure professorships (Soffer, 1994, p28). The declared aim for the new university was the training of ‘captains of industry’. Anderson makes the point that when Chamberlain coined this phrase he was referring specifically to the middle management required to run a factory, not the ‘generals or colonels’ who owned it (Anderson, 2006, p77).

The campaign fund exceeded expectation and had raised almost three hundred and sixty thousand pounds by 1900 (Drummond, 1998, p249). It was the year in which Birmingham was officially granted the charter that transformed their civic college into the ‘first civic university’ (Anderson, 2006, p77). The creation of Birmingham University coincided with the new millennium; it was a pivotal moment for English higher education. Apprehension for Britain’s continuing status as a world power and its ‘economic competitiveness’ renewed public and political interest in the relationship between the ‘universities and scientific research’ (Anderson, 2006, p80). Science related subjects were still largely avoided by the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge who continued to defend their ‘medieval disciplines’ by maintaining a requirement for students of all subjects to first qualify in Greek (Barnett, 1987, p218).

The civic universities recognised

Germany’s commercial ascendancy, military development, and expansionist ambitions coupled with ‘geographical proximity’ would soon lead Britain to see Germany as a ‘primary threat’ (Thompson, 2000, p18). Equally the ‘English danger’ was the topic of ‘countless’ German publications (Schmitt, 1918, p1). As the ‘great power rivalries’ began to build, fears were voiced that British ‘scientific and technical education’ was not producing the expertise that would be required should the country need to defend and renew itself (Anderson, 2006, p66). English universities could not easily be convinced to undertake militaristic training and research. Despite receiving some financial assistance universities remained free of state control and enjoyed considerably more independence than their continental equivalents (Anderson, 2006, p30; Barnard, 1961, p249).

However, for the civic universities, ‘financial independence’ often meant almost continual campaigning for additional funding (Silver, 2003, p6). Though the civic universities’ declared aim was to ‘rely primarily on local contributions’, it quickly became apparent that such sources could not keep pace with the levels of support required (Barnes, 1996, p298). The running costs of Manchester University alone had trebled during the years between 1900 and 1914 (Barnes, 1996, p298).

But the civic universities were a great success. Their scholarship ranged across ‘every field of knowledge’, students were enrolled for technical as well as professional studies and all were approached with the ‘methodological rigor’ that might otherwise be associated with ‘a liberal arts academic training’ (Soffer, 1994, p29). Oxbridge declared its disdain for the overly practical as being too closely associated with the ‘vulgar world’ of commerce, manufacture and financial profit (Anderson, 2006, p106) but the civic universities had grown out of provincial colleges that were necessarily created in industrial cities. It was therefore quite natural for them to have a ‘scientific or technological bias’ (Barnard, 1961, p199). Higher education and research were slowly being recognised as potential sources of industrial progress (Silver, 2003, p13) but not quickly enough for the commentor who in 1901 wrote that Britain’s best ‘trained brains’ were being lost to countries who appreciated that ‘intellectual supremacy’ was connected to ‘commercial supremacy’ (Starling, p1028, 1901).

The undervaluing of the civic universities, was a reflection of the ‘anti-industrial, anti-urban, anti-technological bias’ that had been adopted by that sector of British Society who clung to the country’s ‘aristocratic past’ (Barnes, 1996, p301). This attitude was also promoted by the ‘nation's elite educational institutions’ where it was ‘assimilated by an upwardly mobile, increasingly gentrified middle class’ (Barnes, 1996, p301). It was certainly an anti-industrial view that was presented in a 1914 Oxford University broadsheet, which charted the ‘progress’ of a civic university student and included the couplet: ‘He gets degrees in making jam - At Liverpool and Birming-ham (Warner, 2001, p24). Oxbridge undergraduates may have been amused by the idea of university level qualifications in commercial and industrial processes but it was the deficiency of such skills that was beginning to endanger Britain’s standing as a leading manufacturing nation.

This chapter has charted the rising importance of research-based methods in higher education and the impetus this gave to the founding of the London universities. It has explored the elevated international status gained by Oxford and Cambridge universities through their management of the civil service examinations and funds generated by the Great Exhibition that enabled the extension of technical education provision. Finally the chapter has detailed the founding, by British industrialists and entrepreneurs, of the colleges that would eventually become the basis for a national university network.

Chapter 2 1890-1930

Chapter two describes the early years of the newly chartered universities, the launch of the London School of Economics and the consequences of Britain's 1914 entry into the First World War. I relate how the previously rather low status of institutions of higher education was elevated by the wartime requirement for skilled administrators and researchers. This newfound respect for higher education was to last through to Germany's surrender of 1918. However, efforts to establish an international forum to prevent future wars were significantly diminished by the refusal of the US congress to join. This signaled America's postwar return to isolationism allowed Britain to adopt a proxy hegemony that reinstated colonial and career opportunities for university graduates.

In what follows I describe how the postwar surge of new and returning students obliged the government to subsidise higher education costs via the University Grants Committee. Almost as the state was agreeing to provide for both university running costs and the provision of residential facilities, the country was subjected to a massive economic shift. The situation had international origins but was exacerbated by Britain's overly optimistic return to the gold standard at the prewar level. The economy could only be balanced by severe fiscal control, which cut public funding and squeezed workers wages. In 1926 the Trades Union Congress retaliated by calling a nationwide general strike. After several days the action was called off with no side gaining any advantage except maybe those university undergraduates who had been allowed the novelty of waiting on tables and driving buses or trains. This chapter also explores how British and American academic life initially rode out the effects of the 1929 American stock market crash but could not avoid the subsequent economic depression. Severely curtailed investment drove American institutions of higher education to collaborate more closely with commercial interests while their British counterparts redesigned PhD courses to better suit and attract American students. Universities were beginning to adopt the internationally outward looking stance that would later be identified as an element of globalisation. Although toward the end of the nineteenth century Britain's hegemony was increasingly under threat.

Fin-de-siècle slippage

Britain entered the last years of the nineteenth century with its economy resting on the ‘three pillars’ of Victorian policy planning, a combination of the gold standard, free trade and very cautious budgets (Tomlinson, 1990, p14). Many leading politicians believed that free trade represented a ‘universal economic truth’ that would eventually lead to a ‘new moral order’ of peace and international financial stability (Cain, 1999, p2). This view seemed to be confirmed by the number of countries that had become financially and commercially interlocked with the British led trading system (Hirst, 1997, p409). But by 1890 the growth of these interlocked economies had begun to slow down. The economic ‘utopia’ promised by the ‘optimistic globalisers’ was plainly in doubt (Davies, 2005, p56).

Economic observers do not dispute that European economies began to decline but they are less sure of the ‘nature and extent’ of the depression (Berghoff & Moller, 1994, p262). Friedlander argues that the downturn may have been created by the expanding global market itself (Friedlander, 1992, p19). Rapidly improving transport systems distributed products and produce via a network of steamships, railways and roads that reached out across the world. New routes further speeded consignments through alpine tunnels and the Suez and Panama Canals (Ruggie, 2002, p27). Steamships had reduced the cost of ‘transoceanic transport’ making previously expensive imports cheaper. Bulk cargos like grain, which were not worth moving by sail, were made financially viable by the larger, faster steamships (O'Rourke, 2008, p37). As the vast American and Canadian grasslands came under cultivation ‘transatlantic’ wheat began flooding the European market (Estevadeordal et al, 2003, p369). Refrigerated transport was sufficiently advanced by 1870 as to significantly reduce the prices of meat, fruit and vegetables (Legrain, 2002, p93). The absence of trade barriers allowed demand to be met by new sources, the resulting increase in availability led to a dramatic fall in world commodity prices (Davies, 2005, p56).

As commodity prices dropped and the European depression began to bite there was a significant ‘crumbling’ of the support previously enjoyed by the free trade sector (Howe, 1997, p286). Europe’s cereal producers were the first and the hardest hit and they cried out for the protection of import duties (McCord, 1991, p441). Many governments ‘caved in’ and reinstated agricultural tariffs severe enough to prevent further integration of the international markets (O'Rourke, 2008, p37).

Britain's dream of a world united by free trade was sent 'into reverse' (Legrain, 2003, p91) as the European economy sank behind new barriers of import duties and tariffs (Price, 1999, p91). The spirit that had driven the international integrated economy slowly 'dribbled away' (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p10). Britain's 'complacent assumption' (Cain, 1999, p2) that free trade would become recognised as a sure path to universal growth and prosperity was badly shaken. However, Britain stubbornly retained its open market policy becoming the 'last redoubt' of the cause (Clark, 1998, p38), refusing to change course even when its 'open door' policies threatened to ruin domestic agriculture (Howe, 1997, p194). O'Rourke argues that this determined political stance illustrates the reduced political importance of agriculture within the 'first industrial nation' (O'Rourke, 2000, p458).

The perception of Britain's future as an importer of raw material and an exporter of manufactured goods remained unchanged and an increasingly heavy reliance on foreign food imports illustrates the continuing confidence in the theory of comparative advantage (McCord, 1991, p330). McCord argues that the depression was largely confined to continental Europe and that its effects in Britain were exaggerated by those landowners in a position to make the most noise (McCord, 1991, p330). But there was an undeniable 'hardening of the international tone' and this had caused slow down in economic growth (Trevelyan, 1922, p367). Britain imported increasingly large amounts of food while exporting machinery that mechanised the production of goods rather than the goods themselves (Havighurst, 1966, p16). Thompson states that this would eventually depress the manufacturers market and that this period should have been used for reflection and reorganisation. Much of Britain's industry was based on cotton and iron, but the twentieth century was approaching with new technologies that featured electricity, chemicals and the manufacture of steel (Thompson, 2000, p160). Not only were Germany and the United States beginning to excel in these areas, but unlike Britain they sheltered their 'infant industries' behind 'high tariff barriers' while developing higher output and superior product (O'Rourke, 2000, p457).

By 1900 American manufacturers were responsible for thirty six percent of the 'world's industrial output' (Seavoy, 2003, p256). They were easily able to supply their own massive home market without having to rely greatly on imports (Cole, 1965, p86).

Motor vehicles created great change including a preference over traditional high street shopping for the convenience of the new ‘cathedrals of commerce’, the department stores (De Grazia, 2005, p156). Exports however were considered very desirable and America nurtured more manufacturing corporations with international ambitions than either Germany or Britain (Seavoy, 2003, p256). Some American commercial exports such as Heinz bottled foods, Campbell’s tinned soups and Remington typewriters had already achieved international status by 1900 and would go on to become global brands (Scholte, 1999, p14).

Britain was not greatly concerned. It was able to maintain its free trade stance because it was ‘Greater Britain’, a phrase coined by Charles Dilke in 1869 to convey the Britishness of the British Empire (Dilke, 1869, pvi). Greater Britain at that time encompassed a quarter of the worlds ‘habitable’ landmass (Porter, 2004, p1). Imperial expansion had been developed into an ‘economic and strategic entity’ which could be relied upon to provide a captive export market (Clark, 1998, p38). Britain had long since achieved naval supremacy and its merchant shipping fleets ‘dominated world commerce’ (Hirst, 1997, p410). London was the world’s financial centre, investing so heavily in foreign railways, mines and industry that by 1900 the city’s brokers managed over forty percent of the ‘world’s overseas investments’ (Legrain, 2003, p95). Britain’s overall productivity may have been decreasing, but it was generally taken as indicative of a slow down, rather than ‘an absolute decline’ (McCord, 1991, p436).

The Victorians considered the year 1900 to be the last of the nineteenth century rather than the first of the twentieth, so the notion of the new millennium was postponed (Harvie & Matthew, 2000, p135). However 1900 did mark the opening of London Underground's ‘Central line’ (Havighurst, 1966, p25) and Hiram S. Maxim’s knighthood for the invention of the machine gun, the world’s ‘swiftest death-dealing machine’ (Briggs, 2002, pp39). The Queen died in following year bringing an end to the sixty-four year Victorian era. Her long absence from public life had hampered the government and become a ‘political nuisance’, there were ‘sighs of relief’ in some quarters (Havighurst, 1966, p5). For Britain the new century brought a new monarch, a less fettered government and a revived spirit of optimism. It was the age of telephones, motorcars typewriters, gramophones, domestic electric lighting and world’s first purpose built cinema, which opened in Colne, Lancashire, in 1907 (Harvie & Matthew, 2000, p135).

New century, new universities

Britain entered the twentieth century with a total of only twenty thousand students in higher education. Briggs argues that this was simply not enough for a country that claimed a 'special place' in the future planning of the world (Briggs, 2002, p36). The supporters of university reform and extension argued that higher education had a significant role to play in this brilliant future (Soffer, 1994, p29). The country's civic colleges drew confidence from the example set by the city of Birmingham and were quick to press their advantage; the first years of the new century saw 'remarkable developments' in university education (Barnard, 1961, p249). The 1902 Education Act passed the responsibility for all education other than universities onto local borough and county councils; Prime Minister Balfour explained that the Act would create a connection that would link up through the whole system to university level (Anderson, 2006, p81; Barnard, 1961, p250). Also in 1902 the federal Victoria University was dissolved and within two years its constituent parts, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds were awarded independent university rank. Sheffield obtained its charter in 1905 and Bristol followed in 1909 (Barnard, 1961, p249). These six institutions were known as the civic or the provincial universities. Anderson suggests that the collective term 'Redbrick' is derived from Liverpool University's Victoria Building which is of distinctive redbrick (Anderson, 2006, p78).

The new redbrick universities followed the lead of London's University College and King's College in modeling themselves on successful 'Scottish and German examples' (Vernon, 2004, p17). The notion of the Humboldtian research university had by this time taken firm root throughout Europe and America as well as in Scotland (Halsey, 1992, p39). However, it was only Humboldt's principles that travelled well, the practice was rather different.

Almost all German universities were 'welfare-state institutions' whose primary financial support was provided by the taxpayer (Ash, 2006, p47-48). University running costs could be taken from the public purse because higher education was regarded as a 'public and not a private good' (Ash, 2006, p48), hence the government called the tune, they supervised university curricula and exercised approval of professorial appointments (Anderson, 2006, p30). Their English university counterparts were almost all private ventures that received little state aid (Vernon, 2004, p217).

In 1906 the various agencies that provided some financial support were drawn together as the ‘National Advisory Committee on Grants to University Colleges' (Silver, 2003, p5). These grants were comparatively small and English universities retained considerably more ‘legal and financial independence’ than their continental equivalents (Anderson, 2006, p30). In England the government could not ‘dictate’ what a university should teach or control the appointment of staff (Barnard, 1961, p249). This lack of state intervention allowed manoeuvring space for the ‘schemes’ of two independently minded champions of higher education, Sidney Webb and R. B. Haldane (Vernon, 2004, p105).

Webb, Haldane and the LSE

As a young man Sidney Webb’s exceptional aptitude for learning enabled him to pass the civil service entry examinations without ever attending a university, and to obtain a first division post at the Colonial Office (Anderson, 2006, p84; Cole, 1946, p47). In 1892 Sidney Webb married Beatrice, a political researcher, writer and heiress (Webb, 1948, p30). The couple were able to become deeply involved in socialist politics after Beatrice’s inheritance provided ‘sufficient means’ for them to ‘work for nothing’ (Webb, 1948, p64). The Webb’s became the ‘moving spirits’ of the Fabian Society, a concerned middle class socialist group and in 1892 Sidney was elected to the London County Council (LCC) (Anderson, 2006, p84). Despite being denounced in the Pall Mall Gazette as both a socialist and a ‘wiley, shrewd adroit wirepuller’ (Stead, 1892, p50) Webb became a popular and effective LCC member. He sat on numerous committees and was chairman of the Technical Education Board (Harrison, 2000, pp270). He spread a sphere of influence on every available level, creating around himself the myth of Webb the ‘Machiavelli of County Council politics’ (McBriar, 1949, p75).

In 1894 Henry Hunt Hutchinson, an ‘eccentric’ but wealthy supporter of the Fabian Society, became depressed by advancing age and illness and shot himself (Webb, 1948, pp84-85). His considerable fortune of twenty thousand pounds was left to the Fabians with directions that Sidney Webb, assisted by three trustees, should spend the entire sum on the advancement of socialism (Webb, 1948, p85). Webb had frequently criticised the Oxbridge universities for their lack of economics teaching (Harrison, 2000, p286), he harboured a vision to correct this with a school of economics in London (Webb, 1948, p85).

To a man with such an ambition, but without the means to achieve it, the Hutchinson legacy must have come as 'manna from heaven' (Cole, 1961, p68). When some of the Fabian Society members failed to see the socialist value in the project and suggested that it might contravene the terms of the trust, Webb sought advice from his friend Richard Haldane, Q.C. (Harrison, 2000, p297).

Haldane was a 'philosophical Germanophile' with a well-connected upper class Scottish background. He had studied at Göttingen University before embarking on a 'distinguished' career as a London barrister and becoming a radical Liberal MP. The experience of studying in Germany had created in Haldane an 'idealist world-view' and a sincere commitment to public service (Vernon, 2004, pp87-88). Haldane considered higher education to be 'essential to a modern society' for its fostering of insight and organisation (Silver, 2003, p18). Sidney Webb, the 'austere' socialist and Richard Haldane, the wealthy 'socialite' would seem unlikely friends and collaborators (Vernon, 2004, p89). Both men believed in taking 'reasoned and efficient action' (Vernon, 2004, pp88-89). Haldane doubtless approved of 'wiley' Webb and his sometimes-dubious methods and both were often involved in 'public spirited conspiracies' (Harrison, 2000, p297).

Haldane considered the legal implications of Webb's intention to use the money for the founding of a school of economics. He then advised that if Webb firmly believed that the workers lot would be improved by the scientific study of social conditions then the socialist requirements would have been met and his proposed use of the bequest could be regarded as legal (Beveridge, 1949, p44). Once assured, Webb bulldozed all objections aside declaring that the school should simply be seen as a 'permanent and institutionalised' version of the Fabian's socialist lecture programme (Harrison, 2000, p286).

The London School of Economics and Political Science started life in 1895 in a rented ground floor apartment near London's Strand. Student numbers increased rapidly, and day to day running costs became an immediate concern (Vernon, 2004, p88). Webb initially diverted LCC funds intended for the Technical Education Board (Kadish, 1993, p229), to the coffers of his 'new venture' (Beveridge, 1949, p48) and eventually convinced the LCC to officially become the LSE's 'principal source' of funds (Vernon, 2004, p88). From its earliest days the school had been registered with the Westminster authorities as a library that conducted lectures and classes.

Webb knew that the Scientific Societies Act of 1843 exempted libraries from the payment of local rates (Beveridge, 1949, p50). For similar financial reasons Webb chose to eschew a royal charter. Instead the LSE was incorporated as a company and limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts. A special dispensation authorised the school to leave the word 'limited' out of its name (Beveridge, 1949, p51) but it technically remains (Reg no. 70527) 'The London School of Economics and Political Science Limited' (LSE website, 2011). Such financial dodges were no longer required after the LSE became established as the 'chief powerhouse of British social science' (Anderson, 2006, p84) and also one of the country's 'most heavily endowed... academic institutions' (Beveridge, 1949, p44).

In 1904, the Haldane Committee was created to produce an overview of the enlarged and somewhat disparate group of science and technology institutions at South Kensington (Sheppard, 1975, p90). Both Sidney and Beatrice Webb were members of the committee and supported its eventual conclusion that all of the existing South Kensington science and technical schools should be fashioned into a 'major new entity' (Silver, 2003, p17). In 1907, the South Kensington institutions were duly amalgamated and became the Imperial College of Science and Technology (Anderson, 2006, p84). Haldane directed that the teaching at Imperial College be styled after that used by 'German technical high schools'; he wanted to create an institution 'fit for the metropolis of the Empire' (Anderson, 2006, p84). Although no longer the only industrialised nation, Britain maintained its hegemony through its capital's management of the 'liberal world economy' (Callinicos, 2006, p146). London was the 'imperial city' (Morris, 1979, p27) literally the 'hub of a global Empire' (Tabili, 2006, p54). However with both 'industrial and naval supremacy' under threat from continental technical innovation Britain's leaders elected to side with one of Europe's 'two great military blocs' (Callinicos, 2006, p146).

European alliances: a basis for war

Historical accounts are often more conveniently divided by political, economic and social events than by the calendar. Consequently the beginning of the First World War is widely considered to mark the end of the long nineteenth century and the beginning of the short twentieth century (Clark, 1998, p10; Hobsbawm, 1994, p56; Kurth, 1995, p3).

The terrible conflict that was to start the new century had been foreshadowed by years of diplomatic pacts and treaties, these were the agreements by which the nations of Europe sought to insure themselves against foreign military interference (Anderson & Hershey, 1918, p16). Most alliances were initially drawn up as defence pacts but throughout the first decade of the century they were secretly rewritten in increasingly aggressive terms (Poon, 1979). In 1910, George V ascended the British throne. He and Germany's Wilhelm II, Russia's Nicholas II and Alexandra were all cousins. It appears that there was a 'real bond' between 'Nicky and Georgie' (Perry & Pleshakov, 1999, p163) but somewhat 'strained relations' between 'Nicky and Willy' (Anderson & Hershey, 1918, p285; Tomaszewski, 2002, p50). When a British, French and Russian triangular alliance was arrived at, George V expressed his belief that European peace could be maintained as long as these three 'stuck together' (Tomaszewski, 2002, p50). This was not to be the case.

In Vienna, the leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire expressed concern that the Balkan provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were becoming unstable (Anderson & Hershey, 1918, p382). The region had been under Ottoman rule for almost five hundred years but was increasingly coming under the influence of Slavic nationalists (Anderson & Hershey, 1918, p382; Wedel, 1932, pp40-42). To contain this 'threat', Austro-Hungarian troops moved into the area and in October 1908, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was declared and with it Vienna gained valuable coastal access (Wedel, 1932, p58). In June 1914 the Austrian army planned a show-of-force military exercise in Bosnia, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was invited to attend. The Archduke and his wife accepted with reluctance, the region was known to be still 'seething' with armed nationalists (Gerolymatos, 2002, p12). Their concerns were justified. As their motorcade slowed to negotiate the narrow streets of Sarajevo, nationalist gunman Gavrilo Princip, found himself within yards of the official car. He stepped forward and fired two shots, killing both the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife (Eisenhower, 2004, p137).

The assassination, though shocking, did not at first appear to be of great political significance. Ferdinand's death was the fifth in a series of recent Habsburg assassinations and none had previously warranted an international response (McMaster, 1918, p1). But there was political capital to be made; the eastward expansion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had long been blocked by Serbia (Robbins, 1993, p3.

The loss of the Archduke provided Vienna with a ‘golden opportunity’ to accuse Serbia of sheltering Bosnian rebels (Richelson, 1997, p18). An Austrian ultimatum arrived in Belgrade on July 23rd; its deliberately provocative demands could not possibly be met (Gooch, 1923, p536). The Serbs appealed for assistance from the Russian government (Warth, 1997, p192) and a ‘sickening train of events’ was set in motion (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003, p49).

The ‘tangle of complex alliances, treaties’ and ‘military considerations’(O’Farrell, 2007, p367) started the dominoes falling. Austria declared war on the Serbians and by default the Russians. The Russians reciprocated. The German declaration against Russia triggered a defence pact that brought in France. The French mobilised. Germany declared war on France hoping that a swift invasion via neutral Belgium would quickly dispose of the French threat leaving German troops free to turn on Russia (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p3; Holmes, 2004; Schmitt, 1918, p5-60). German domination of Europe would allow the seizure of French possessions in North Africa, their presence in the Mediterranean would jeopardise British sea routes to India and the whole of its ‘extra-European network’ (Cain & Hopkins, 1993, p450).

Prime Minister Herbert Asquith’s assurance that the British public would be mere 'spectators’ to the conflict (Asquith, 1923, p300) was ridiculed by the pro-war lobby who produced an eighty year old treaty in which Britain guaranteed Belgian neutrality (Brockon, 1990, 147). This agreement was violated on August 2nd when Germany invaded Belgium and Asquith was obliged to declare war on Tuesday, August 4th 1914 (Asquith, 1923, p319; Coakley, 1956, p366). So precarious had been the balance of political power in Europe, that from the Austrian ultimatum, when all had seemed at ‘perfect peace’ (McMaster, 1918, p3), to Britain’s entry into the war, only twelve days had elapsed (Havighurst, 1966, p120).

During the first hour of hostilities the British General Post Office cable ship ‘Alert’ was ordered to sea. When it returned its crew had completed the dangerous task of dredging up and irreparably severing the undersea cables that were at the heart of Germany’s international telegraphic communications system. Britain was determined to be the only country able to access the ‘vast network’ of telegraphic communication (Winkler, 2008, pp5-6) All further communication between the Germans and the western hemisphere had to be conducted by neutral cable or wireless (Spencer, 1953, p55).

The only way to send a secure message via these 'open' services was to employ a complex cipher. The keys to the German codes were contained in a series of books, almost all of which had already been obtained by British Intelligence without Germany's knowledge (Spencer, 1953, pp56-57).

British espionage

Britain's overview of clandestine activities both at home and abroad was formalised in 1909 with the founding of the British Secret Service Bureau. Domestic counter espionage fell to MI5, while MI6 was in charge of overseas intelligence gathering (Clarke & Norman, 1999, p486). Many military officials were disdainful of the Secret Service seeing it as simply sneaks 'telling tales' (Heffernan, 1996, p507). Intelligence gathering was an un-gentlemanly occupation that relied on 'casual agents', 'rogues' (Goodman, 2009, p156) and a smattering of genuinely patriotic eccentrics with a 'taste for travelling incognito' (Heffernan, 1996, p507).

The ill-informed military decisions of the Boer and Crimean Wars helped persuade the government of the need for specialists to gather secret information rather than 'casual agents' (Richelson, 1997, p11). Those charged with seeking out such specialists rarely looked further afield than Oxford and Cambridge universities. David George Hogarth, the keeper of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum from 1909, was an early 'academic spy-master'; he recruited graduates who might be trained in the 'arts of espionage under the guise of scholarship' (Heffernan, 1996, p513). One of Hogarth's protégés, T. E. Lawrence, participated in pre-war sorties into the Ottoman territories; archaeological excavations provided 'cover' for spying missions with a 'clearly defined' military purpose (Satia, 2008, p35). Hogarth praised Lawrence's remarkable ability to report back absolutely everything that he had seen and heard (Hogarth, 1920, p428).

Despite spending two years of the First World War in the desert and suffering 'Arab diseases and fleas', Lawrence of Arabia remained 'essentially an Oxford intellectual' (English, 1987, p7). Spies from almost all the belligerent nations were observing Middle Eastern developments, with the British paying particular attention to the tottering Ottoman Empire which still posed a 'serious threat' to sea routes and oil supplies (Woodward, 2009, p). Britain's 'honorary attaches' at the embassy in Constantinople maintained a surreptitious watch on all of the Ottoman territories.

These agents were 'aristocratic Oxbridge graduates' who had been drawn by the intrigue and excitement of the 'drama of European rivalry' that unfolded in the Byzantine city (Satia, 2008, p34). Goodman states that some 'gentlemen' volunteered for dangerous missions in exotic places simply for the 'thrill of the adventure'; they signed on for spying missions as 'a sort of bourgeois game' (Goodman, 2009, p156). Those public school attitudes that had earlier dismissed espionage as underhand now celebrated covert intelligence gathering as an exciting extension of school and university game playing. Indeed the chief of the secret service thought spying to be 'capital sport.' (Richelson, 1997, p11).

The conflict begins

Asquith's declaration of war with Germany 'was greeted with unbelievable glee' (Roberts, 2005, p48), and an indecent rush to destruction that was driven by patriotic fervour and the 'popular support' for a fight (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p4). Each of the belligerent countries committed to war in the unshakable belief that given their military superiority it would 'all be over by Christmas' (Grenville, 2005, p60). In Britain's case this optimistic prediction was shared by the Cabinet who had been assured by economists that none of the countries involved could afford to finance total war for 'more than six months' (Allen & Hirst, 1926, p21). Britain's position as the 'world's banker' could be damaged or even ruined by a protracted conflict that required high levels of 'defence expenditure' over a long term (Cain & Hopkins, 1993, p450). Just three months after the opening of hostilities the cost of the British war effort was running at a million pounds a day (Allen & Hirst, 1926, p22).

Germany had an economic advantage, in that its industrial expansion had been methodical and its traditionally 'authoritarian political culture' lent itself more efficiently to adaptation for war (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p48). The British government had no such national control and an aversion to a large standing army prevented any early consideration of conscription (Havighurst, 1966, p132). Britain relied instead on part-time support groups, such as the Territorial Army, the Officer Training Corps and the Army Reserve. All had been formed or revised under the 1905 to 1912 tenure of R. B. Haldane as Secretary of State for War (Roberts, 2005, p51). Public schools and universities were encouraged to offer training that would introduce boys to the 'military arts' and the 'gentlemanly character' that was required of an officer (Palazzo, 2000, p15).

The War Office oversaw the teaching and examinations and by 1914 most public schools and all of the universities had ‘officer training programs’ (Palazzo, 2000, p15). Haldane’s army reforms were generally well received, however the reformer himself fared less well. A famous advocate of German university methods, research and even German industry, Haldane fell foul of the wave of ‘hysterical anti-German feeling’ that swept Britain in the first days of the war (Vernon, 2004, p183). His enthusiastic support for all things German forced him to give up his cabinet post and maintain a lower profile until the armistice. Haldane spent much of the rest of the war co-opted onto various committee’s and enquiries, usually at the suggestion of friends like Beatrice and Sidney Webb (Vernon, 2004, p183). The decline in the popularity of things German also led to the dismissal of the First Sea Lord, Prince Louis of Battenberg, because of his German name, which he quickly abandoned in favour of Mountbatten (Juniper, 2004, p33). The royal family had inherited Prince Albert’s surname and title, they discarded the title, ‘Saxe-Coburg-Gotha’ and changed the family name, which is recorded as either ‘Wettin or Wipper’ to the rather more English sounding ‘Windsor’ (Tunzelman, 2007, p42)

The battle plans of all the belligerent powers almost immediately ‘proved inadequate’ (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p4). Much of the forward planning had been based on backward thinking. An old style 'war of movement’ that required a highly ‘mobile combination of infantry and cavalry’ had been both expected and planned for (Havighurst, 1966, p136). But the German army’s rapid advance through Belgium had found its entry into France barred by an unexpectedly well-prepared defence. Neither side made any significant progress and a stalemate developed, the textbook field battle strategies were abandoned as the opposing armies dug in (Hammond, 1999, p8). All hope of the widely predicted Christmas finale was dashed as the fighting became bogged down in the muddy, bloody attrition of virtually static trench warfare.

The scale of the conflict soon required that Britain’s regular and territorial armies be reinforced; a campaign designed to appeal to the ‘patriotism and self respect’ of potential volunteers was a huge success and young men from all social backgrounds flocked to join up (Dent, 1961, p64). To provide these raw recruits with leaders the War Office turned to the Officer Training Corp. Two thousand ‘invitations’ were sent to ‘university and public school men’ urging them to apply for a commission (Palazzo, 2000, p15).

The impact on all of the universities was ‘catastrophic’ (Vernon, 2004, p176). Large numbers of students left or suspended their studies in their enthusiasm to participate in the Great War. Oxford, Cambridge and the civic universities, who had ‘hardly got into their stride’, were suddenly deserted by many of their ‘students and younger teaching staff’ (Dent, 1961, p64).

Preoccupied government agencies were unconcerned with academic niceties. For them the universities provided either requisitionable buildings or officers to lead men ‘over the top’. Potential troops were quickly processed and ‘swept indiscriminately’ into the trenches (Dent, 1961, p64). Initially civilian expertise was ignored, this had led to Britain’s top physicist, Henry Moseley, the ‘discoverer of atomic numbers’ (Morrell, 1997, p6) being arbitrarily recruited and sent to Gallipoli where he was killed in action (Sinclair, 1986, p19).

But a shortage of artillery shells at the beginning of 1915 caused a loss of confidence in the technical staff of Britain’s munitions factories (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p40-45). New production methods had to be developed quickly; this dire necessity prompted both government and manufacturers to turn to the only existent broad based pool of ‘scientific and technical’ research available to them – the universities (Vernon, 2004, p176). In Germany all universities were closed and any remaining staff and students forced to accept essential war work (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p26), but most British universities, despite the shortage of personnel, stayed open and attempted to maintain some sort of normality.

Prior to 1914 the civic universities in particular had experienced an ‘uphill battle’ to get research work taken seriously. Now, these ‘sources of scientific expertise’ were presented with ‘something of a breakthrough’ (Barnes, 1996, p285). The civics had already made significant contribution to the development of machine lubricants, ‘colliery pumps, vanadium steels, chrome leather, gas fires’ and ‘sparking plugs’ (Sanderson, 1988, p90). Their new challenge was to create replacements for those materials and products that had previously been imported.

The universities took up the challenge with enthusiasm and the Great War was to prove a ‘huge accelerator’ of technical progress (Juniper, 2004, p32). The university research departments were confident that any aspect of German progress could be bettered, as long as the ‘necessary resources were made available’ (Heffernan, 1996, p505).

These sentiments were enthusiastically echoed by some of the country's 'most distinguished scientists' and an energetic campaign was launched by novelist H. G. Wells, to seek additional funding for scientific facilities involved in war work (Heffernan, 1996, p505). From 1915 the civic universities began to enjoy a more prestigious role in 'national life' (Barnes, 1996, p285); their research departments were able to replicate many urgently needed industrial processes relatively quickly. Britain was soon producing its own versions of numerous products previously regarded as being of uniquely German manufacture; these included 'dyes, drugs, optical glass, magnetos and soap powder' (Sanderson, 1999, p169).

Technological advancement was also apparent in the trenches of Western Europe. As the war dragged on, the opposing earthworks became more elaborate, and more permanent. A 'great sinuous scar' dominated the landscape from the Channel coast to the Swiss border (Heffernan, 1996, p511). Railways, motorcars, aircraft and telephones were all employed in the newly industrialised processes of making war. Communication by radio was a technical possibility but the British Army was 'unenthusiastic', the Corps of Signals had made a 'huge investment in telephone and telegraph cable' and saw the fixed battle positions throughout France and Belgium as an 'unequalled opportunity to lay it all out' (Juniper, 2004, p36). Literally thousands of miles of wires and cables made up a communications network that connected frontlines with support trenches, staff headquarters and strategic planning offices on the continent and the politicians in London (Juniper, 2004, p36).

Mud, blood, trenches and politics

Mismanagement of the war in general and the shell shortage in particular was making Asquith's minority Liberal government look positively incompetent (Glynn & Booth, 1996, p126). Senior Conservatives were invited into a coalition Cabinet but this did not stop the criticism of Asquith's lack-lustre leadership (Simkin, 1997). The Daily Mail and the Times, the flagship newspapers of Lord Northcliffe, were happy to print such complaints along side editorials calling for Asquith to be replaced (Thompson, 1999, p68). David Lloyd George, a Liberal member of the Cabinet, was in agreement with Northcliffe and together they 'plotted' with the Conservatives to 'bring about Asquith's downfall' (Duffy, 2009). In December 1916 the coalition Cabinet finally decreed that Asquith must go. Soon after the forced resignation Lloyd George was named as the new Prime Minister (Pearce, 2007, p16).

He immediately appointed a five-man ‘quick decision’ team (Pugh, 1999, p168) who met daily in the 'garden suburb', a group of large sheds that stood behind the Downing Street terrace (Winter, 1994, p15).

As the conflict approached its second Christmas without showing any sign of a satisfactory conclusion, the flow of British volunteers signing on for military service ‘began to sag’ (Havighurst, 1966, p132). If the British were to provide the large-scale reinforcements pledged to France and Russia, the Liberal members of the Cabinet would have to overcome a ‘fundamental aversion’ to conscription (Chester & Willson, 1957, p60). The Conservatives pressured Lloyd George who was reluctant but understood the circumstances (Havighurst, 1966, p133). When the Military Service Act came before the House half the Liberals voted against or abstained. But their objections were not significant enough to prevent the vote being carried and, as of January 1916, unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 41 started to be called up for compulsory enlistment (Havighurst, 1966, p133). Within three months the call up was extended to all men of the prescribed age regardless of marital status. Its passing into law trampled the ‘sacred principles’ of the very liberal Liberal Party and shattered its ‘cohesion’ so completely that it would never recover (Robbins, 1993, p133).

1916 was a grisly year of ‘great battles’, the conflict raged with no end in sight (Morrow, 2003, p124), the alliance arrangements ‘virtually guaranteed’ ever more casualties as previously neutral nations were drawn into the fray (Darby, 1998, p25). The treaties and pacts of increased economic and social interdependence had been transformed into the ‘globalisation of... conflict’ (Molle, 2003, p22). The original ‘Central’ alliance of Germany and the empires of Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman’s were reinforced by Bulgaria while the ‘Entente’ powers of Britain, Russia, and France had gathered Italy and Japan and would eventually recruit Portugal, Romania, Greece, China and the USA to its cause (Strachan, 2004). Many of the belligerent countries, Britain in particular, had colonies and dependant nations from which combatants could be drawn. Neutral countries such as Switzerland, Spain, the Scandinavian states and the Netherlands were not caught up in the actual conflict but were ‘not unaffected’ (Robbins, 1993, p25). Only the world’s remotest regions managed to stay out of both the fighting and its resultant economic chaos.

As far as the populations of the countries engaged in the 'all-embracing do-or-die' of 'industrialized combat' (Steinberg et al, 2005, pxix) were concerned, it was indeed a 'global war' (Strachan, 2004).

International repercussions

Directly after declaring war Britain deployed a naval blockade to prevent shipping of any kind from reaching German seaports (Kennedy, 1982, p4). Germany did not have the naval vessels to mount a permanent counter-offensive, the only way it could impose a retaliatory blockade was to resort to maritime guerrilla warfare – the submarine raider (Goebel, 2008). Little effort was made to avoid attacks on neutral shipping and so began the 'submarine frightfulness' (McMaster, 1918, p82). In March 1915 three American cargo ships were sunk by German U-boats (McMaster, 1918, p82). America's President, Woodrow Wilson, warned Germany that further attacks would be met with retaliation (McMaster, 1918, p82). On May 8th 1915, a German submarine sank Cunard's luxury liner, Lusitania, off the coast of Ireland with the loss of a hundred and twenty eight American lives (Aron, 2004, pp112-113). The American public was outraged by the attack and by Germany's claim that the sinking was 'a great event' (McMaster, 1918, p100). Allied and neutral governments were 'sickened' as the Kaiser hailed the submarine's captain and crew as hero's (Rose, 2007, p250).

The Kaiser had little else to celebrate; the 'noose', which British patrols had drawn around the North Sea, was 'cinched ever tighter' and Germany's civilian population were starving (Kennedy, 1982, p4). It was a game of brinkmanship, German estimates of British food stocks led them to believe that five months of unrestricted submarine warfare would bring the country 'to its knees' (Morrow, 2003, p153). Such attacks would inevitably involve American shipping and prompt Wilson to declare war, but the Germans were gambling that Britain would be 'starved into defeat' before the United States could transport a significant force to Europe (Kennedy, 1982, p5). In September 1916 American diplomats were warned by German high command that any ship failing to identify itself as neutral would be sunk without warning (Hayes, 1920, p215). Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany but did not declare war (Coakley, 1956, p370). In London, Prime Minister Lloyd George was furious that Wilson was still 'not going to fight' (Kennedy, 1982, p6).

The German submarine offensive had indeed severely reduced the number of merchant ships that made it into British ports. There was only enough grain in Britain to last six weeks; if the U-boats were allowed to continue unchallenged it would spell disaster (Morrow, 2003, p202).

On January 16th 1917, the British intercepted and deciphered a telegram from Arthur Zimmermann, the German Foreign Secretary that had been sent to the President of Mexico (Coakley, 1956, p370). The message was intended to entice Mexico into partnership with Germany in a war against the United States. In exchange, Mexico would receive substantial financial support plus, after the assumed victory, the return of the lost territories of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona (Coakley, 1956, p370; Hayes, 1920, p216). The British passed the message, with proof of its authenticity, through diplomatic channels to Washington. Wilson released the text of the telegram to the press; the 'nation was shocked' (Coakley, 1956, p371).

While America reconsidered its position the Russian war effort was halted by an internal Bolshevik revolt. Government troops lost control and in March the Tsar abdicated. The news revitalised the Western allies who hoped that the Russian 'steamroller' could now pursue the war with 'more energy and effect' (Kennedy, 1982, p9). Russia's provisional government adopted an administration based on the democratic western model and America led the world in its recognition of the new regime (Hayes, 1920, p21). A democratic Russia was acceptable to Wilson as an ally against Germany in a war which he expected to be joining very soon (Hayes, 1920, p21).

Those Americans who opposed such action were immediately considered either 'unpatriotic or pro-German' (Spencer, 1953, p97). Germanic sounding names were changed, sauerkraut would be called 'liberty cabbage', hamburger became 'salisbury steak' and frankfurters would forever be 'hot dogs' (Perry & Pleshakov, 1999, p115). The United States of America finally declared war on Germany on April 6th 1917.

Germany and the new Russia

During March 1917 Germany not only had to consider America's entry into the war but also the prospect of Russian troops under better leadership (Kennedy, 1982, p9). Although Russia's provisional government was a ‘questionable’ coalition of Duma moderates and Petrograd Soviets its actions appeared politically credible (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p119). An uneasy contentment had settled over Russian society since most of its ‘professional revolutionaries’ had fled the country after the failure of the 1905 uprising (Warth, 1997, p92). The surest way for the Germans to ‘cripple’ this political progress would be to return the exiled revolutionaries and hope that they created enough trouble to destabilise the provisional government (Kennedy, 1982, p9). Vladimir Lenin was a leading revolutionary, a ‘brilliant combination’ of ‘fanatic and staff officer’ (Cruttwell, 1934, p425) who had for some years been in ‘deep hiding’ in Zurich (Trotsky, 1957, p460).

German Foreign Secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, once again stepped into the role of history maker. He had, since 1914, been surreptitiously providing Russia’s Bolshevik revolutionaries with funds and the abdication of the Tsar now offered ‘an entirely new spectrum of opportunities ‘ (Pearson, 1975, p62). Lenin’s ‘value to the Germans’ rose considerably (Pearson, 1975, p62) and Zimmermann was authorised to offer the agitators the opportunity of a return to Petrograd (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p125). The offer was accepted and the German high command arranged for Lenin and his circle of political exiles to be transported safely across the war torn continent in a specially marked and sealed railway carriage (Cruttwell, 1934, p425). No one was allowed to leave the train en route; the ‘radical virus’ was only to be released when the train reached Petrograd (Kennedy, 1982, p9).

Once back in Russia a series of stage-managed events promoted the charismatic Lenin as a figure to be revered to the point of ‘uninhibited demagogy’ (Seton-Watson, 1952, p364). By October Lenin’s Central Committee were sufficiently assured of popular support that they gave the order for armed insurrection and seizure of ‘key buildings and installations in Petrograd’ (Wood, 2003, pxx). The 'Red October' coup was a success, it had, initially at least, seized power ‘without bloodshed’ (Trotsky, 1957, p460). Lenin told his Bolshevik-Soviet ‘Communist Party’ that the German army posed no further threat as ‘German workers’ would soon follow the Russian example and rise up against their leaders (Seton-Watson, 1952, p364).

But the future of Russia was in the balance and with no evidence of 'other revolutions in the offing' Lenin approached the Germans for peace negotiations (Goemans, 2000, p253).

In return for withdrawing from the Eastern Front the Germans demanded that Russia 'give up the Baltic states, Finland, Poland, and Ukraine' (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p137; Mosley, 2010). Lenin had little choice but to advise his comrades to agree to Germany's 'harsh terms' and then concentrate on consolidating the revolution (Goemans, 2000, p258). In March 1918, the Congress of Soviets voted overwhelmingly to accept the German conditions (Goemans, 2000, p256). In July 1918, the world was told that Tsar Nicholas, the Tsarina Alexandra, their five children and members of the royal household had all been executed (King & Wilson, 2003 p45). The 'brutal murders' were carried out in the cellar of a house in Ekaterinburg on orders from Lenin. Their remains were thrown into a disused mineshaft (Ananich & Ganelin, 1996, p398; McCauley, 1997, p171).

The war on Europe's Eastern Front was over. But the wrangling over the treaty had taken up so much of the Communist party's time that their opposition had been able to regroup. Russia 'erupted' into a civil war which it took the Communists two years to quell (Mosley, 2010). Political unheaval was spreading and President Wilson was aware of the danger of the rest of Europe falling into similar turmoil.

Wilson's fourteen points

In a series of wartime speeches Wilson was careful to avoid alienating German-Americans by stressing that their argument was with a regime rather than 'kinsmen' (Bailey, 1947, p35). One of his speeches presented a fourteen-point agreement that he considered would be acceptable grounds to open for peace negotiations with Germany. Though never discussed with the Entente powers or intended as a blueprint for action, the 'Fourteen Points' were published internationally (Bailey, 1947, p44).

German front line troops were showing signs of 'war weariness'; the prospect of soon having to fight fresh American reinforcements sapped morale and increased the inclination to desertion or munity (Watson, 2008, p21). The revolution in Russia served as an example to socialist workers in Germany that 'victorious revolution' was a real possibility and that it could end the war (Broué, 2005, p90). Young recruits being transported to the trenches sensed this atmosphere of rebellion.

They delayed their trains by rioting and vandalism, uncoupling wagons and assaulting their officers or simply deserted (Watson, 2008, p22). In October, the German fleet was ordered out into the Baltic, the great battleships had sailed only once and the ensuing Battle of Jutland had been inconclusive (Morrow, 2003, 150). Now after almost two years of leaving the 'ships and the morale of its sailors rotting' the call came to action (Morrow, 2003, 152). But desperation was in the air and rumours of a 'final suicide attack' circulated; the sailors were in no mood to obey such orders and mutinied (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p120).

The sense of inevitable German defeat that spread through the starving homeland was confirmed when almost half a million German front line troops were incapacitated by influenza (Morrow, 2003, p245). Strategic planning and battle tactics were virtually impossible with so many soldiers too demoralised or too ill to fight (Rosenhek, 2005). By July 1918 the depleted German lines were in no state to repel a 'sudden and ferocious' (Watson, 2008, p23) attack by British, French and American troops at the Marne or another by British and French troops in August. Germany's spring offensive had been a disaster and the army began to retreat (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p120). By September the German government had to admit that it had lost the war. No official statement was made to the Entente powers but the German chancellor contacted President Wilson and requested a meeting to negotiate peace based on his suggested fourteen points (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p120). Ferguson argues that a factor in the inability of the German army to continue as a fighting force was the outbreak of a particularly debilitating strain of influenza (Ferguson, 2006, p145).

The first global pandemic

The second week of November 1918 saw an end to the trench warfare of the Western Front. Absent from any celebration of the armistice were the fourteen thousand 'Londoners' who had died just a week before after falling victim to the pandemic referred to as 'Spanish' influenza (Brennan, 2001). Though the infection was to become a global threat epidemiogical studies suggest that it originated in an over crowded American army camp in Kansas during the spring of 1918 (Hsiao, 2003, p77). A violent outbreak of influenza had hospitalised over a thousand soldiers and despite all being in the 'prime of life', forty-eight of the men died. These deaths were officially attributed to pneumonia (Chowder, 1997, p14).

The logistics of total war demanded the 'wholesale' mobilisation of troops (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p43). Previously unheard of numbers of individuals had to be massed, corralled, fed and rested while being trained and transported. The war effort was paramount and was not to be jeopardised by niceties like comfort or sanitary arrangements (Rosenhek, 2005). When the troops from the camp in Kansas joined the two million strong American army that was 'shipped off to Europe' during the summer of 1918 they were accompanied by a 'tiny, silent companion' (Chowder, 1997, p3). Almost as fast as the troops were being deployed, incidents of influenza began being reported (Chowder, 1997, p4). The fatality rate among victims was in the region of eight per cent and many of those succumbed within twelve to forty eight hours (Mowat, 1955, p22). This deadly infection was twenty five times 'more lethal than ordinary flu' (Hsiao, 2003, p83).

By August 1918 outbreaks were appearing almost simultaneously at the main American disembarkation point of Brest in France, the military coaling port of Freetown in Sierra Leone and in Boston, Massachusetts (Phillips & Killingray, 2003, p7). The infection went on to claim victims in India, Australia and New Zealand (Ferguson, 2006, p144). Fearing the morale damaging effect of such news it was suppressed by the governments of all of the belligerent nations. The world learned of the threat through uncensored health reports published by the newspapers of neutral Spain. Unfortunately the source of the information became associated with the source of the infection that has, ever since been known as 'Spanish' influenza (Hsiao, 2003, p78).

From its first appearance, the mutated virus 'travelled rapidly' through the urban and rural populations adjacent to the main shipping and trade routes until it 'circled the globe' (Phillips & Killingray, 2003, p4). A world population caught up in its first global war also had to contend with the most virulent 'outbreak of infectious disease' in world history (Oxford, 2003, pxvii). The infection raged for a total of forty-six weeks, and then suddenly stopped (Langford, 2002, p4). The epidemiological view is that the pandemic simply 'ran out of fuel'; there were no more susceptible victims (Chowder, 2003, p18). Previous plagues were geographically confined whereas the influenza pandemic, aided by efficient transport systems quickly attained rapid transmission and greater 'global reach' than even the Black Death (Phillips & Killingray, 2003, p4). There are no comprehensive figures for a total death toll and estimates are variable.

Total British deaths from influenza during 1918-1919 are estimated to have exceeded one hundred and fifty thousand (Mowat, 1955, p22). Estimates for the worldwide death toll suggest a figure of between thirty and fifty million, approximately four times the fatalities suffered by a combination of all belligerent nations during the Great War (Wisner et al, 2003, p37). One percent of American males in the twenty five to thirty five age group was lost to influenza (Ferguson, 2006, p144) as were an estimated fifteen million citizens of India (Roberts, 1999, p286). Stearns argues that here was a consequence of 'global unity' that could never have been anticipated (Stearns, 2010, p67).

The war ends in Europe 1918

Against German wishes Austro-Hungary sued for peace on September 15th followed on the 19th by the collapse of the Bulgarian army and the defeat of Turkey (Pitt, 1963, p246). Germany had no more allies and enormous 'social, economic and political pressures' were threatening internal collapse (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p126). On November 8th German representatives met with Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Supreme Commander of the Allied armies, at a railway siding deep in the Compiègne Forest near Réthonde (Pitt, 1963, p266). Marshall Foch wasted no time on pleasantries; the Germans were given the terms of an armistice and three days to discuss them (Goemans, 2000, p282). Allied demands included the withdrawal of all German troops from the Western Front, the surrender of the High Seas Fleet and the renunciation of the territories gained via the treaty with Russia (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p138; Goemans, 2000, p305).

It was suggested to the Wilhelm II on November 9th that a government without a Kaiser might be free to 'avert revolution' and negotiate better peace terms. The Kaiser abdicated and a new German Republic was proclaimed (Cawood & McKinnon-Bell, 2001, p120). At first light on November 11th, in Foch's railway carriage headquarters, an armistice was signed that would silence the guns on the Western Front at 11am (Lowry, 1996, p1). Britain had achieved its main war aim; Germany had to give up its battle fleet, was economically 'crippled' and was no longer a continental threat (Lowry, 1996, p163). The Fourteen Points structure, which the German people had thought inviolate, was considerably modified (Goemans, 2000, p300). The apparent harshness of the new terms had been predicted by German nationalists who believed that their armies were 'unbeaten' and gave credence to the legend that Germany had not lost the war but had been betrayed by Communists and Jews (Bailey, 1947, p53).

The myth that the German army could, and should, have fought on, had it not been stabbed in the back 'at the Front' (Watson, 2008, p21) gave rise to a national 'dreamland' where the 'concept of defeat was rejected' (Steiner, 2001, p18). It was a notion later built upon and applied to great effect by the Nazi party (Bailey, 1947, p53).

The Paris peace conference and the League of Nations

Representatives of the Allied countries met in Paris on January 18th 1919 for what would prove to be months of discussion to finalise the details of the treaty (Steiner, 2001, p15). British economist John Maynard Keynes, then a treasury official, was sent to Paris to oversee relief for Germany and Austria, he was required to deal with numerous reports of 'misery, disorder and decay' (Keynes 1920, p7). It was a depressing experience, which left him with the most 'pessimistic diagnosis' of the Versailles Treaty (Clark, 1998, p36). Keynes was afterward to write 'The Economic Consequences of the Peace' in which he argued that the vengeful modification of the original Fourteen Points would allow the Allies to force Germany to pay back 'the entire cost of the war' (Keynes 1920, pp113-115). Keynes predicted that such retribution would lead to international financial disintegration and another world war (Sinclair, 1986, p11).

President Woodrow Wilson arrived at the Paris peace talks with every intention of pushing through his personal ambition for a new international peace organisation (Crafford, 1943, p145). His 'league of all the nations' was intended to go beyond a simple 're-weaving' of the old and plainly flawed diplomatic web (Walworth, 1986, p1). Wilson's commission to draft a League of Nations covenant ran simultaneously with the peace conference and its members hurriedly accepted its clauses without pausing to 'quibble over details'. There was little 'clear-headed opposition' (Bassett, 1930, p2) and although Wilson was not adverse to reasoned argument, he rarely altered an opinion more than once. Keynes states that the President was much 'harder to de-bamboozle' than he had been to 'bamboozle' in the first place (Keynes, 1920, p55). The League of Nations covenant was 'intertwined' with the peace treaty so that both would come into effect together. By the time the double document was signed Wilson had left for home, with the exception of one short interlude, he been absent from the White House for six months (Bailey, 1947a, p163).

On his return President Wilson found the Republican Party objected strongly to any American involvement in the League of Nations (Powaski, 1991, p20). 1920 was a presidential election year and Wilson proposed that it should be considered as a ‘solemn referendum’ on the treaty (Kuehl & Dunn, 1997, p1). The American electorate’s choice of a Republican President ended Wilson’s plan for American membership of a League of Nations (Kuehl & Dunn, 1997, p18). The Treaty of Versailles was thrown out and in July of 1921 Congress officially ended the war with Germany and Austria on its own terms (Walworth, 1986, p556).

America, in common with the rest of the world now just wanted to get back to a normal life But for many American’s the idea of ‘normal’ conjured, not the world of five years before but that of fifty years before. It was a sentimentalist’s ‘backward look’ to a nineteenth century when America remained undisturbed because the western world was ‘organised peacefully’ for the benefit of international trade and commerce by the ‘British system’. A political and diplomatic machine that maintained the balance of power in Europe and ‘policed’ the oceans. An all-pervasive system, so ‘smooth working’ that most people were unaware of it. Americans in particular were prone to assume that their largely idyllic isolation was a ‘law of nature’ rather than a ‘temporary conjuncture of political and economic power’ (Ward, 1948, p102).

Britain’s proxy hegemony

The war had been long and expensive. International markets and investments were in turmoil and regardless of the apparent victory Britain emerged as ‘the greatest loser’ (Barker, 1994 p38). The country’s monetary reserves were significantly diminished and it had run up large debts (Clark, 1998, p57). The conflict that had sapped the strength of the British economy had considerably strengthened that of America (Allen, 1954, p743). Indeed the United States had become one of the world’s few creditor nations and was well placed to fill the economic and political power vacuum likely to be left by a ‘fading’ Britain (Berghahn, 2007). However, America chose to assiduously avoid the ‘responsibilities of hegemony’ (Cohen, 2001, p98). The ‘ordinary voters’ (Berghahn, 2007) had made their voices heard and their preference was for the United States to leave the ‘policing’ of the world to others, exactly as they had done in the nineteenth-century days of ‘Pax Britannica’ (Ward, 1948, p105).

But the time for ‘extreme’ isolationism was past. The economic recovery of Europe became ‘vital’ to the American authorities after 1918, because without it they would have little chance of recouping their billions of dollars in war loans. In an effort to stimulate the European economy American commercial interests were encouraged to pursue a ‘vigorous policy’ of expansion in transatlantic trade and investment (Powaski, 1991, p28).

Clark states that an ‘internationalised economy’ can only exist in the presence of a hegemon who will undertake the responsibility of leadership. The lack of such a leader will lead to economic instability and eventually market ‘disintegration’ (Clark, 1998, p61). America so determinedly dodged the role of monetary world leader that when institutions, conventions and establishments were reconvened after the war, they did so on the basis that the pre-war model of British hegemony still existed (Molle, 2003, p22). It was a stay of execution that the British were eager to embrace. Their already considerable empire had been extended by the League of Nations who had ‘awarded’ Britain custodianship of German colonial Africa and the lands that had once been ruled by the Ottomans (Walker, 2002, p39). This was to be the ‘territorial apogee’ of the British Empire but many of the additional regions were impoverished and/or politically unstable (Torrent, 2007, p536). They were more likely to prove a liability than a benefit to a country as yet unaware of the widening gap between ‘British power and British responsibilities’ (Walworth, 1986, p1).

British wartime colonial recruitment propaganda was heavily laced with patriotic appeals to the idea of ‘Empire’. It was a theme that would continue to be useful to Britain in its largely proxy hegemonic role. Imperialists were able to raise an image of empire for the greater good, to distract from the domestic ‘post-war quagmire’ of delayed demobilisation, unemployment and trade deficits (August, 1985, p20). The British Empire at its Victorian peak hardly impinged on the British people, everyone knew of it but the general population saw little beyond a ‘vague and ill-explained appendage to sea-power’ (Morris, 1979, p37). It was not officially taught or promoted, school classrooms did not display ‘red-bespattered world maps’, the public were only dimly aware of its vast extent (Porter, 2004, pp46-47). That was changed by the Great War. The total mobilisation and management of available resources had seen ’large-scale’ state intervention across the home front and throughout the empire (August, 1985, p14).

The Empire Resources Development Committee was established in 1916 to coordinate the transport and distribution of natural resources from the colonies (August, 1985, p20). The ‘ideological cement’ of conflict had bound the imperial realm together with the Westminster government and a better informed British public (Hobsbawn, 1987, p70).

This awareness of empire was promoted by a series of high profile and frequently ‘racialist... public rituals’ (Keane, 2003, p51). Most were designed to appeal to children, as they were most likely to develop a ‘reverence for the institution of the Empire’ (Heathorn & Greenspoon, 2006, p100). Hobsbawn identifies ‘Empire Day’ as the most enduring of these efforts to ‘institutionalise pride in imperialism’ (Hobsbawn, 1987, p70). Empire Day was launched in 1902 but failed to gain a national foothold until the start of the war in 1914 (Judd, 1996, p209). By 1916 the government recognised the propaganda value of an imperial celebration and it was awarded ‘official status’ as an annual national event (Heathorn & Greenspoon, 2006, p100). Many schools incorporated Empire Day into the curriculum where it was expanded into an entire week of often ‘uninspiring’ (Judd, 1996, p209) flag waving, ‘patriotic songs, dance, tableaux, and lectures’ (Heathorn & Greenspoon, 2006, p100). Barnett argues that these developments in state education directly reflected the opinions of officials and teaching staff who had been ‘moulded by the Arnoldian public school and Newmanian Oxbridge’ (Barnett, 1987, p223).

The 'myth-making' rituals that reinforced the empire also reinforced the notions of the public schools and Oxford and Cambridge universities as being the ‘custodians and transmitters of English culture’ (McCulloch, 1991, p16). No institution was immune from this idolatry and the high moral precepts and chivalric code of the liberally educated ‘gentleman’ trickled ‘all the way down to the broad current of British national schooling’ (Barnett, 1987, p223). ‘Ordinary’ secondary schools adopted many public school features including the ‘house system, uniforms, games’, and in some cases the ‘teaching of classics’; the Oxbridge ethos of empire superiority eventually ‘permeated the whole of society’ (Porter, 2004, p62).

Throughout much of the twentieth century generations of school pupils were handed textbooks intended to ‘inculcate patriotism and good citizenship’. History, geography and religious studies were all potential vehicles for the message of ‘imperial nationalism’ (McClelland & Rose, 2006, p286). The very word ‘imperialist’, previously only attached to inappropriately ambitious ‘foreign despots’, had been transformed from the ‘dubiously pejorative to the almost unarguably proper’ (Morris, 1979, pp23-26). Arnold and his followers used classical education to direct young minds toward the ideal of ‘privileged service’ within an empire that was widely considered the ‘new Rome’ (Morris, 1979, p23). Indeed, in later years it was said to have 'equalled, if not surpassed’ ancient Rome by virtue of the vast extent of land and sea that fell under Britain’s jusisdiction (Morris, 1979, p28). The world was enmeshed in the ‘chains and loops’ of a British bureaucracy (Keane, 2003, p130) that ensured the smooth running of colonies from Malta to Hong Kong and dominions from Canada to Australia and New Zealand (Ferguson, 2003, p163).

Ferguson argues that the difficulty in maintaining British rule lay not in the dominions but in a country like India where the British represented a tiny percentage of the population (Ferguson, 2003, p190). In the mid-nineteenth century, barely a thousand British civil servants delegated numerous tasks and responsibilities to ‘tens of thousands’ of local subordinates for the administration of two hundred and fifty million Indians (Lloyd, 2001, p94). The only way in which a small distant island like Britain could govern so many in such distant lands was with the collaboration of the local, and often traditional, indigenous governing elite (Dodds, 2008, p513).

The need for this educated ‘pro-British elite’, who would gladly do Westminister’s bidding, was met by the many outposts of higher education that sprang up throughout the empire (Ferguson, 2003, p188). Many of the sons of proserous traditional leaders were ‘eager for Western education’ and enrolled in whatever universities were available (Ferguson, 2003, p188). The British ‘higher education industry’ was on its way to becoming an ‘important global phenomenon’ (Keane, 2003, p130).

English higher education 1918/1919

Four years of war had changed Britain as a country. The war had drawn ‘an indelible line’ under a way of life that would never return (Upton, 2004, p10). Of the seven hundred thousand British combatants who died, almost twenty per cent were officers (Sinclair, 1986, p11). Trench conflict had developed into a deadly but static war of attrition; it required a hasty re-drawing of the etiquette of battle. Junior officers were expected to lead by example; their lives became ‘notoriously hazardous’ (Vernon, 2004, p180). Invariably leading an attack they would be the first to break from their earthwork cover and all too often they would be the first to face a hail of machine gun fire, hence a ‘disproportionately high number’ of fatalities were ex-public school and university students. Britain had lost much of its ruling-class-in-waiting; these were the men whom the universities were now expected to replace (Upton, 2004, p10).

Men and women who wanted to study at university, either to resume interrupted work or as new students swelled the number of fulltime students to over twenty five thousand (Barnes, 1996, p277). The government encouraged higher education enrollment by offering generous funding on ‘the easiest terms’ (Dent, 1961, p64). It was a concerted effort on the part of the authorities to re-establish an intellectual elite and the funding programme ensured that within a year of the ceasefire all of Britain’s universities were ‘crammed to bursting point’ (Dent, 1961, p64). This ‘represented something of a breakthrough’ for the civic universities who now enjoyed a new level of respect (Barnes, 1996, p285). Throughout the war their research departments had worked with industry to develop aircraft designs, gas masks and tanks, they had also made advances in orthopaedic surgery and psychiatric treatment as well as providing operatives for the murky world of intelligence gathering (Winter, 1994, p9).

The often unconventional approach of university researchers helped to produce imaginative plans and innovative uses for modern technology that did much to ‘break the stalemate in military thinking’ (Sinclair, 1986, p20). Britain’s strategic planners came to place an ‘increasing reliance’ on university scientific and technical expertise; these expectations remained after the war and ‘highlighted the significance of higher learning’ (Vernon, 2004, p176).

After some post-war ‘anxiety’ prompted by the lack of specifically British ‘scientific and technological progress’ (Willson, 1957, p25), the temporary wartime Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was made permanent by the ‘Committee on the Machinery of Government’ (Chester & Willson, 1957, p80). The committee was headed by the irrepressible R. B. Haldane who had just returned to public office along with all of his ‘previous fellow-conspirators’ (Vernon, 2004, p184). The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research provided grants for university researchers, for postgraduate scholarships and for the creation of new research facilities. Oxford, Cambridge and London became the ‘privileged’ universities who gained most of the additional funding, the new facilities and resultant ‘academic prestige’ (Vernon, 2004, p177).

Many post-war higher education students found their university buildings damaged and neglected (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p472). Funding was an immediate concern; the government’s wartime budgets had ‘tapped every legitimate source of taxation’ and still it had been necessary to borrow almost seventy per cent of its expenditure (Grady, 1927, p120). The resulting lack of liquidity had increased prices and pushed up inflation (Grady, 1927, p286). Institutions, such as universities, whose income was derived from a combination of endowments and student fees, saw an alarming decrease in income from both sources. The civic universities who had received some pre-war state assistance were now simply ignored (Anderson, 2006, p86), while the older universities who relied on investments were hit especially hard by inflation (Bond et al, 1955, p3). British servicemen returning to the Oxford colleges found that many rooms were still rented to ‘American cadets and soldiers’ in a flat fee deal which had been negotiated by the War Office (Winter, 1994, p10). University buildings in other parts of the country had also been either rented or requisitioned as barracks, hospitals, and factories or for storage (Vernon, 2004, p180).

The University Grants Committee

Following the ‘crucial contribution’ of the universities to the war effort these institutions were held in high regard (Vernon, 2004, p181). This, however, did little to alleviate the financial difficulties which most universities were experiencing despite accumulated wartime rents and some official ‘non-recurrent’ payments (Anderson, 2006, p113).

Higher education research in particular had moved into a 'more central place' in British society (Barnes, 1996, p285), the universities were recognised as an important element in the country's future and deserving of public funds (Vernon, 2004, p176).

Some of the civic universities had been in receipt of government aid since 1889 and such payments had continued to be made at irregular intervals (Anderson, 2006, p80). This largely unplanned financial assistance was not subject to ministerial overview and had evolved into a myriad of ad hoc agencies that made uncoordinated awards of differing amounts. In 1911, the government decided that it was time for all these sources to be drawn together under the Board of Education and administered by the new Advisory Committee on University Grants (Owen, 1980, p256). This grand plan, however, proved impractical because the Board had no jurisdiction in Scotland and would only be able to regulate for England and Wales. Even this reduced scheme was curtailed when Lloyd George who, in 1911 was Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that he would be responsible for Welsh university grants which would be paid directly from the treasury (Owen, 1980, p257). Lloyd George was later to claim that he was 'apprehensive' about the effect of putting the essentially Anglican Board of Education in charge of Welsh finances (Owen, 1980, p257). The Anglican Church in Wales was unpopular with much of the Welsh population who preferred the more nationalistic doctrines of the Calvinistic Methodists, the Congregationalists, the Baptists and the Wesleyans (Morgan, 1999, p15). Under Lloyd George's stewardship Welsh universities and colleges were frequently awarded a 'much higher average grant' than was enjoyed by their English counterparts (Owen, 1980, p257).

The post-war period saw an enormous amount of 'administrative tidying-up' and in 1918 it was decided that state aid to British universities would be more efficient if assigned to the responsibility of a single body (Anderson, 2006, p113). The 'new appreciation' of the role of higher education was accompanied by an increase in its financial assistance to about a million pounds a year. This was a dramatic sum and would require equally dramatic administration; the University Grants Committee (UGC) was created to regulate all university grants for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland (Anderson, 2006, p113). This was purely a political initiative created by government ministers and civil servants as a 'mechanism' for allocating funds rather than as any kind of a convenience for the universities (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p472).

From the outset it was obvious that the English Board of Education, because of its limited jurisdiction, could not manage the new committee. So the creators of the UGC simply looked to the nearest administrative 'umbrella' – the Treasury. Here was a government department that had already successfully administered university grants for Wales and was invested with the required authority throughout the three kingdoms. The decision was taken that the University Grants Committee would adjudicate and then advise the Treasury on how the grants should be distributed. It was a simple solution that was quickly accepted because of its practicability (Owen, 1980, p258).

During the decades that followed, the UGC was widely praised its maintenance of the universities' autonomy. This benign non-interference was the 'consequential advantage' of a convenient solution that was further enhanced by the finely balanced membership of the committee (Owen, 1980, p258). The academicians prevented the state from exerting 'direct control' (Theisens, 2003, p208) while the civil servants kept a watch on the strings of the public purse. The result was the now widely documented 'buffer' effect between the providers and the recipients (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p471; Silver, 2003, p6). Anderson argues that however unintentional the developments that led to the UGC's position as a 'buffer' between the State and the universities it has since been hailed as a 'unique British contribution to public administration' (Anderson, 2006, p115).

Despite the apparently large amounts of money involved each university never received more than twenty nine percent of its annual running costs from the UGC (Armytage, 1954, p305). The expectation that these funds would ultimately bring some 'level of state direction' was not a condition that Oxford and Cambridge universities chose to accept (Vernon, 2004, p176). Although inflation had 'undermined' the value of their investments, land and endowments (Winter, 1994, p24) both ancient institutions preferred to 'remain aloof' from the majority UGC government scheme (Barnes, 1996, p299). They hoped for the return of colonial and empire students; before 1914 twenty five per cent of Oxford's students 'were born outside Britain' and many of those attended under their own national scholarship schemes (Anderson, 2006, p56). The Oxbridge institutions were not alone in their difficulties or their hopes.

The post-war economic slump

The first use of the phrase ‘fed up’ was recorded in 1900 but it was not widely used until 1919 when people had much more to be ‘fed up’ about (Havighurst, 1966, p156). The hope for a better post-war future had been dampened after only eighteen months, overseas trade slowed markedly and eventually slumped (Havighurst, 1966, p160). The boom evaporated so swiftly that that industrial, business and political leaders were caught ‘off guard’ (Havighurst, 1966, p161). The government was accused of relaxing its wartime economy controls too quickly; management of the coalmines and the railways had been retained although both were to prove a financial liability (Pelling, 1960, p95).

David Lloyd George had called an election for December 14th 1918. Although the result was ‘resounding victory’ for his Liberal-Conservative coalition (Sharp, 2008, p30), in reality the prize went to the Conservatives who won seventy percent of the government seats (Pearce, 2007, p16). Lloyd George, a ‘nominal Liberal’ now found himself leading an overwhelmingly Tory government. It was a ‘rickety, makeshift’ coalition (Pearce, 2007, p17) that would tolerate Lloyd George’s leadership for only as long as he could ‘stem the rise of the Labour Party’ (Pugh, 1998, p42).

The country was riven with class conflict, industrial unrest, rising unemployment and crime (Havighurst, 1966, p162). Engineering, railway, textile and dock workers all began suffering wage cuts; trades unions ‘debilitated by fear of unemployment’ were reluctant to defend their members (Seaman, 1991, p114). The slump was most dramatically felt in the heavy industries of north. In areas like Clydeside, Tyneside, Lancashire and South Wales, the rise in unemployment was ‘rapid and alarming’ (Havighurst, 1966, p161). The years 1919-21 saw almost four thousand recorded strikes, which with their accompanying demonstrations, meetings and marches added to the atmosphere of conflict.
Rumours of a Communist revolution in Scotland were taken so seriously that troops and tanks were deployed in the streets and squares of Glasgow (Pearce, 2007, p19).

Lloyd George had been an undeniably effective war leader but in siding with the Tory’s he had alienated his Liberal supporters and become ‘a Prime Minister without a party’ (McGill, 1974, p110). With his popularity ‘rapidly disintegrating’ (Dawson, 1937, p58) Lloyd George and his coalition government struggled to prevent unemployment figures rising further (Pearce, 2007, p18).

Large grants were made to local authorities for house building programmes and by 1921 two hundred thousand state-subsided ‘council’ houses had been built (Seaman, 1991, p119). As the number of public services escalated so did the cost of administration, subsidies and pensions required to provide them. Unemployment in 1921 went over a million and the cost of the new unemployment insurance payments and various poor relief schemes soared (Burrows & Cobbin, 2009, p201). How such a programme was to be funded was becoming a very serious problem. Standard rate income tax had already risen to a ‘ruinous’ thirty per cent (Burrows & Cobbin, 2009, p201). The country was closer to ‘national bankruptcy’ in the early 1920’s than ever before (Mowat, 1955, p131). The editors of some popular newspapers claimed that Britain faced bankruptcy because of the vast amounts of money wasted by government, a process they dubbed 'squandermania'(Seaman, 1991, p117).

1920’s higher education

The cost to the tax payer of subsidising university education was minimal, few ever gave it a thought. It was simply an ‘elite affair’ (Anderson, 2006, p114). By 1922 the post war ‘bulge’ was over and the total number of full time students at English universities had settled to just over forty thousand (Dent, 1961, p65). For most people, a university education, regardless of the institution, was an expensive and time-consuming luxury that, even when it was completed, did not guarantee equality of ‘life chances’ (Jones, 1998, p242). The British universities had risen in the estimation of the authorities but it was remembered how the teaching in pre-war ‘welfare-state’ German universities (Ash, 2006, p47) had become synonymous with ‘national aspirations’ (Anderson, 2006, p87). In post war Britain, German universities were no longer admired. They were now closely associated with what had been a ‘warmongering’ state (Vernon, 2004, p177). Britain’s autonomous universities did not like being ‘coaxed’ into producing the experts that would regenerate the industrial economy (Vernon, 2004, p184). They were in need of more funding but many felt that increased public money could lead to the kind of state interference that caused the ‘perversions of national intellect and culture’ that had befallen the German universities (Vernon, 2004, p187).

The British government did eventually agree to fund scientific research that lacked obvious nationalist purpose on the understanding that it would not benefit any single commercial venture either (Pollard, 1962, p93).

The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research would oversee the scheme, while the University Grants Committee would ensure that higher education institutions were sufficiently developed to provide a supply of suitable graduates (Vernon, 2004, p187). Although the UGC was founded as a mechanism to allocate funding it was increasing called upon to advise in a variety of institutional matters (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p472) and was becoming accepted as representative of a 'national system' of higher education (Barnes, 1996, p299).

Oxford and Cambridge universities had hoped that in five years their finances would have 'recovered' from the war (Savage, 1927, p72). They had not. In 1923 the ancient universities were forced to request state aid (Anderson, 2006, p80). Barnes states that as soon as the Oxbridge institutions 'deigned' to be included in the UGC scheme they were not only awarded the 'largest grants' but also held up as 'embodiments of the ideal'. They became the arbiters of a lofty standard to which all universities should aspire (Barnes, 1996, p299). Post-war fees at Oxford and Cambridge universities had been slightly reduced to increase 'accessibility' but in real terms both institutions remained 'expensive and exclusive' (Jones, 1998, p242). Scottish and civic universities had never provided accommodation and thereby increased accessibility by keeping costs down and by allowing students to live at home or find lodgings to 'suit their pockets'. This pattern was also followed by the University of London (Vernon, 2004, p17). The 'social formation' of a collegiate and residential life that integrated Oxbridge students into 'total institutions' was considered one of the ancient universities most admirable features (Jones, 1998, p239). It was also one of the reasons why they were so expensive.

To qualify for inclusion on the UGC grants list Oxford and Cambridge universities had been obliged to open their books and explain their arcane and otherwise 'opaque' accounting methods (Anderson, 2006, p86). Their compliance meant that, for the first time, inner workings of all English universities were available for 'direct comparison' (Barnes, 1996, p299). Most of the civic universities felt that to be compared with Oxbridge was inappropriate. Initially they had been created by the larger provincial towns to cater for local higher education needs and in almost every aspect they represented a 'distinct alternative' to Oxbridge (Barnes, 1996, p271). The efforts of some of the provincial founders to compete with the ancient universities had been 'doomed from the start'.

In consequence they strove to create a ‘new type of English university’; something that resembled the Scots institutions and the Humboldtian research innovations (Barnes, 1996, p272). After 1923 Oxford and Cambridge universities were aware of the danger of their own uniqueness being ‘engulfed’ by the growing number of institutions offering higher education. Institutions embarked on a programme of academic and institutional cooperation and exchange. Ostensibly, this was to enable a wider understanding of the ‘Oxbridge ideal’ but it also carried the special purpose of underlining their exclusivity (Halsey, 1992, p70). Annual Oxbridge sporting events, most of which had been staged for over a hundred years, were publically promoted for the first time. Major inter-university sporting contests such as the Boat Race, Rugby at Twickenham and Cricket at Lord's succeeded in becoming ‘events of national interest’ (Barnard, 1961, p125; Roberts, 1947, p33).

This 'elitist' promotion underscored the Oxbridge perception of itself as the national provider of an educational experience that prepared the ruling elite for a ‘gentlemanly’ future in politics, administration and the professions (Halsey, 1992, p61). Oxford in particular had been described as that necessary interlude between Eton School and the Cabinet (Ferguson, 2004, p207). In contrast, the civic universities had sprung from a ‘nonconformist and non-metropolitan culture’ and were intended to meet the professional and industrial needs of their own suburban and regional middle class (Halsey, 1992, p66). The notion of Oxbridge being a ‘national’ institution led to the remainder of England’s universities, including London, being regarded as ‘provincial’ (Halsey, 1992, p61) though they were generally referred to as 'civic' universities after R. B. Haldane had coined the term (Barnes, 1996, p276). Such perceptions bolstered the apparent superiority of Oxbridge and encouraged other institutions to treat its ‘largely residential’ educational model as one to be emulated (McKibbin, 1998, p250).

The most frequent criticism of the civic university educational experience was that it lacked communal spirit; a problem that it was assumed could be rectified by a 'vast increase' in residential facilities (Moberly, 1949, p305). Educational commentators and church leaders alike, pressured civic universities to adopt the Oxbridge mode of residential education because they believed that the 'moral purpose' endowed by a 'stronger corporate and residential life' created committed students and better academic results (Jones, 1998, p239).

This chimed well with a pronouncement of Cardinal Newman that a residential ‘university which had no professors or examinations at all’ would be ‘more successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind’ and more likely to produce ‘men whose names would descend to posterity’ than a non-residential institution which acquainted its students with ‘every science under the sun’ (Newman, 1886, p145). Civic university officials who opposed the move declared that their responsibility was to spend available funds on teaching, research and equipment rather than student accommodation (Savage, 1927, p135). Regardless of this argument, many institutions followed the lead of Manchester and launched campaigns to raise money to provide student accommodation (Barnes, 1996, p281). So began a process of ‘academic drift’ (Barnes, 1996, p271) with some civic universities accused of abandoning their founding ethos and 'distinctive provincial' character (Anderson, 2006, pviii) in order to imitate the ‘curriculum and academic style of elite institutions’ (Barnes, 1996, p271). Halsey comments that this ‘shift in scope’ by provincial universities was largely counter productive. Without political influence or ‘social status’ it was impossible for other institutions to pose either a serious challenge or achieve a viable imitation of the ancient foundations (Halsey, 1992, p71).

While overseas students were attracted by the status of an Oxbridge education it was not an option available to all and many settled for one of the newer civics. Their fees and the differing perspectives that they brought were to become a sufficiently important component of university life that teaching and research methods were adjusted to attract them (Anderson, 2006, p108). Traditionally British postgraduate study involved a variety of doctorates, all of a ‘lengthy and demanding kind’. In 1919 these were condensed and organised into a ‘shorter, standardised PhD’ (Anderson, 2006, p108). This was to make English higher education more attractive to overseas students, particularly the Americans whom, it was thought, would still prefer to avoid the ‘unhealthy atmosphere’ of German universities (Vernon, 2004, p184). Keane states a ‘global’ worldview was adopted by ‘outward-looking’ higher education institutions before such a stance was recognised as advantageous by social and political observers (Keane, 2003, p130).

Lloyd George, Bonar Law, Baldwin and MacDonald

By 1922, Lloyd George had lost much of his appeal as a popular leader and was also having to defend his 'brazen sale' of honours (O'Farrell, 2007, p389). His coalition had created over fifteen hundred knights at a reputed ten thousand pounds each and ninety peers at fifty thousand each (Pearce, 2007, p22; Pelling, 1960, p104). The Conservatives were furious that the proceeds had gone into the Liberal coffers (Fekete, 2003, p12; Pugh, 1998, p42) and on October 19th 1922, they voted that Lloyd George should be 'thrown from office' (Pearce, 2007, p16). Four days later the very sick, sixty four year old, Andrew Bonar Law moved into Downing Street as Conservative leader and the new British Prime Minister (Nicolson, 1934, p279). Within six months Bonar Law became so ill that he was forced into hasty retirement (Lyman, 1957, p18; Havighurst, 1966, p179). Stanley Baldwin, only just appointed as Chancellor of the Exchequer was shuffled into the Prime Minister's seat on the grounds that 'no one better' was available (Havighurst, 1966, p180).

That Baldwin almost immediately called an election was contentious enough, but that he intended it be on an anti-free trade platform threw the Conservatives into turmoil (Havighurst, 1966, p181). Senior Tories struggled to 'imagine a stupider decision' than trying to win the electorate over to a protectionist policy with almost no warning at all (Baldwin, 1955, p125). The eventual vote was a Conservative Party disaster, the result was inconclusive but they had lost their ruling majority (Blake, 1960, p45). The Liberals held the balance of power but any thought of Baldwin inviting Lloyd George back into the cabinet was 'beyond the realm of possibility' (Havighurst, 1966, p182). This allowed Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald to form a minority coalition with the Liberals (Laybourn, 2002, p18). Thus, by default the first Labour government set out on its 'brief and storm-tossed voyage' (Blake, 1960, p45).

MacDonald was so unprepared for the task of appointing a cabinet that he had to consult an almanac for a list of the requisite ministers (Mowat, 1955, p172). The final group included Sidney Webb at the board of trade (Powell, 2004, p126) and R. B. Haldane as Lord Chancellor (Mowat, 1955, p172).

While the new Labour ministers astutely refused to discuss publically any economic policies that might be deemed ‘controversial’ (Pugh, 1997, p604) they were courting trouble when within a week of taking office they offered formal recognition of the government of the Soviet Union (Havighurst, 1966, p185).

This sympathetic view of Soviet Russia was to provide political opponents with ammunition in the late summer of 1924. The editor of the British Communist Party newspaper, the ‘Workers Weekly’ had been arrested for publishing an apparently seditious article (Grant, 1967, p268). Later released without charge the editor thanked the Labour government for the ‘strong pressure’ they had applied on his behalf (Grant, 1967, p268). MacDonald strenuously denied any involvement but the Conservatives insisted that the government had interfered with the judicial process (Bar-Joseph, 1995, p303). They ‘tabled a motion of censure’ against the government (Powell, 2004, p131). MacDonald decided to consider the vote to be one of confidence in his government (Havighurst, 1966, p185). The Liberals, unenthusiastic about appearing 'soft on socialism’, voted with the Conservatives (Powell, 2004, p131) and the first Labour government were defeated. Their administration had lasted just ten months (Sinclair, 1986, p23).

The general election that immediately followed saw the Conservatives back in government (Beers, 2010, p293). Baldwin, the ‘plain man in politics’ embarked on his longest term in office, with the same principle as before. His policy ‘was to have no policy’ (Mowat, 1955, p196). He often ignored the opinions of others and certainly did so when inviting the unpopular Winston Churchill in to the cabinet as Chancellor of the Exchequer (Havighurst, 1966, p189). Churchill returned to the Conservatives after twenty years a Liberal and was a ‘staunch’ believer in free trade (Havighurst, 1966, p189). Alderman argues that Baldwin gave Churchill the Exchequer as a tactical move intended to appease Tory free traders (Alderman, 1997, p74). The principle of free trade needed political support; it had been in jeopardy since the First World War when most countries, including Britain had been forced to abandon the gold standard ‘international monetary mechanism’ (Eichengreen, & Flandreau, 1997, p19).

Britain returns to gold

For the leaders of London's financial institutions the only hope of a return to pre-war 'globalised liberalism' was the reestablishment of the international gold standard (Amin, 2000, p3; Booth, 1982, p213). Motives were patriotic as well economic; the pre-war 'gold pound' was widely regarded as a 'symbol of the British Empire' (Anikin, 1983, p154). The gold standard was accepted as the basis of 'economic orthodoxy', it supported the country's prosperity as a whole, and London's prestige as a financial centre in particular (Cain & Hopkins, 1987, p9). Once in place, the mechanism worked so smoothly it was almost as if it was 'governed by a law of nature' (Rothermund, 1996, p19). It was a state to which those who revered Britain's 'past eminence' would strive to return (Galbraith, 1975, p175). Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was an historian and was susceptible to the romance of 'past glories' (Galbraith, 1975, p175).

Churchill had no particular economic expertise and so relied on the 'formidable' roster of gold supporters presented to him by his advisors (Manchester, 1984, p646). These sources of 'misty higher wisdom' eventually convinced Churchill that it was not only in the country's interest but also its 'duty' to go back onto the gold standard (Jenkins, 2002, p388). And even better, Churchill was told, the economy had stabilised sufficiently to allow the restoration of 'convertibility at the pre-war rate' (Eichengreen & Flandreau, 1997, p19). So in his first budget speech the new chancellor announced that Britain was to return to the gold standard and 'tremendous cheers' rang around the House (Manchester, 1984, p645). But there were also dissenting voices. When John Maynard Keynes learned that Churchill had agreed to put Britain back onto the gold standard he had assumed that the pound would be devalued and praised the decision (Moggridge, 1995, p430). After being informed that the pound was to be pegged at its pre-war value Keynes recanted and declared himself mystified that a minister of Churchill's standing should do 'such a silly thing' (Galbraith, 1975, p177).

If pre-war exchange rates were compared with 1925 prices, almost all of the world's currencies could be shown to have lost purchasing power (Anikin, 1983, p154). The pound sterling had to be overvalued by approximately ten percent to enable it to re-enter the gold standard at 1914 values (Galbraith, 1975, p176).

Manchester argues that Churchill's advisors 'were living in the past'; they were attempting to re-create the circumstances of Britain's pre-war economic prosperity in the hope that history would repeat itself (Manchester, 1984, p647). This was not a minority view; many other countries shared the belief that the gold standard had generated economic expansion in the nineteenth century and therefore could do so again (Clavin, 2000, p34). More than forty countries joined the new fixed rate gold standard and pledged to keep their economies balanced. The process of globalisation appeared to be recovering (Clavin, 2000, p34). Britain was the only country not to revalue, though even at the time, many considered this a 'fatal error' (Anikin, 1983, p155).

The immediate effect of the overvalued pound was a rise in unemployment and a drop in exports (Manchester, 1984, p648). Churchill considered that a national 'tightening of belts' was a price worth paying to improve the balance of payments deficit (Anikin, 1983, p154). When a long-standing subsidy on coal was scrapped the coalmine owners compensated themselves by reducing their miners pay (Nearing, 1926, p27). The coal miners, who thought their belts were already tight enough, appealed to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to take action (Nearing, 1926, p28).

A general strike and a general election

The TUC voted to support the miners and called for a general strike to begin on May 1st 1926 (Nearing, 1926, p40). The government quietly activated contingency plans, which complimented the Defence of the Realm Act, a temporary wartime measure made permanent, and the 1920 Emergency Powers Act. Either could be invoked to allow the use of troops to combat any perceived threat to national security (Baldwin, 1995, p61). Prime Minister Baldwin was careful to keep these 'strike-breaking' plans to himself; as always, he felt that it would strategically advantageous to appear not to have a policy (Pugh, 2006, p44).

The media portrayed the strike as a generally good-natured affair with a scattering of violent incidents. Food convoys were attacked passing through London, strike-breaking trams were stoned in Leeds, a police station was attacked in Preston (Havighurst, 1966, p197; Pugh, 2006, p45). But while there may have been injuries there were no deaths directly attributed to the strike. In fact the distraction was 'enjoyed by much of the population' (Galbraith, 1975, p177).

Among those who may have considered the disruption something of ‘a lark’ were the heiresses who waited on tables, the Oxbridge undergraduates who were allowed to drive buses and some even trains (Havighurst, 1966, p197). Some of the strikers passed their time by playing football with the police or troops (Pugh, 2006, p40). Baldwin ‘brushed aside’ the opinion of George V that the soldiers should be considering a ‘military solution’ rather than playing football (Alderman, 1997, p74).

Negotiations between the TUC and the government continued throughout the stoppage. Baldwin appealed to the ‘moderate elements’ within the union movement to understand that the dispute could have no winners (Alderman, 1997, p74). After nine days of being told that the strike could achieve nothing the TUC abandoned its position unconditionally and declared the action to be over without the ‘slightest guarantee’ of any improvement in the miners situation (Nearing, 1926, p41). Baldwin’s policy of calm immobility had ‘paid handsome dividends’ (Alderman, 1997, p74). The disappointed miners attempted to remain on strike but they were eventually forced back to work by hardship (Pugh, 2006, p47-49). Although Baldwin's handling of the general strike was widely regarded as something of a ‘personal triumph’ the resulting prestige had all but evaporated before the approach of the next election (Havighurst, 1966, p199).

The industrial uncertainty that followed the general strike significantly slowed the ‘wheels of trade' (Baldwin, 1955, p131). This reflected badly on the government who appeared to have done little to combat unemployment and had failed to bring prosperity back to the country (Baldwin, 1955, p131). As the May 1929 general election approached, Baldwin’s general air of ‘studious' unconcern translated into a lacklustre campaign (Pelling, 1960, p104). The Conservative record was unimpressive and their election slogan of ‘Safety First’ simply implied 'more of the same' (Powell, 2004, p147). The Conservatives had lost their way and the election resulted in a hung parliament (Blake, 1960, p50). Though trailing badly, the Liberals once again held the balance of power. However, this time, they preferred to step aside leaving the Labour Party as a minority government (Havighurst, 1966, p208). An international economic and social crisis was looming and Ramsey MacDonald’s ‘weak and inexperienced’ administration was going to be left to deal with it alone (Dow, 1998, p136).

The ‘Great Depression’

The London stock exchange maintained close financial ties with its American counterpart on Wall Street, the New York stock exchange. The connection was often too close for John Maynard Keynes who, in 1925, warned of the dangers of fixed ‘rigidity’ between the two financial centres (Keynes, 1932, p233). The ‘roaring’ twenties saw an increasing number of Americans who could either afford, or could borrow money for such home comforts as telephones, radios, gramophones, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, and cars. New owners could even become involved in the future development of these commodities by buying shares in the companies that manufactured them (Shiller, 2000, p104). Between 1921 and 1929, Wall Street share prices rose by an average eighteen percent a year (Dow, 1998, p165). As the price of shares moved ever upward it became obvious to those involved that ‘God intended the American middle classes to be rich’ (Galbraith, 1997, p6).

Although there were indications of market instability as early as 1926, there was no stopping the ‘debt-fuelled boom’ (Smith, 2008). Such was the faith in the share market that speculators of the late 1920’s would buy ‘practically any rubbish’ (Michie, 1999, p263). In September 1929 the New York Exchange hit an all time high, prices hovered for two days then began to fall (Geisst, 1999, p186). The ‘smart money’ began to move slowly but ‘safely out of the market’ (Galbraith, 1997, p108). Initially these sales were made quietly and in small amounts so as not to cause panic but the steady selling began to tell and prices started dropping more quickly. Once the market started to tumble on October 23rd, the plunge was relentless. The ‘sell-at-whatever-price’ stampede wiped five billion dollars off the share market in three days. By the end of October the loss was over sixteen billion dollars (Poitras, 2003, p2). In a matter of days the savings of millions of people had simply evaporated and with it the idyllic notion that ‘American life’ had somehow ‘banished’ poverty (Efland, 1983, p38). The Dow Jones Industrial Average continued to fall until July 1932, by which time a ‘staggering’ eighty nine percent had been wiped off the index. The Dow Jones would not return to its 1929 ‘peak’ until November 1954 (Ferguson, 2009, p159).

The economic disaster of Wall Street escalated until it enveloped much of the Western world; its impact was significantly more dramatic in countries within the new twentieth century version of the gold standard (Archibald & Feldman, 1998, p858).

In 1929 there were forty-two internationally trading nations who subscribed to the gold standard. But this was always at the cost of national economic autonomy. Member countries could not adjust the value of their currency to suit prevailing conditions. It was a 'golden vice' that enabled global trade but restricted independent fiscal planning (Clavin, 2000, p35). The perception of the gold standard as a simple self-regulating mechanism that was beneficial to all under any circumstances was a ‘tragic illusion’ (Rothermund, 1996, p19). The pre-1914 mechanism was not self-regulating. Britain, as the ‘world's hegemonic power’ had guaranteed the gold standard for decades (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003, p49); as long as the British remained the ‘prominent partner’ in the scheme, they were able to manipulate and control their vast overseas colonial and mercantile investments to ensure the continuance of the system (Keynes, 1932, p234).

America emerged from the First World War as the new major world power but ‘isolationist tendencies’ (Molle, 2003, p22) prevented it from assuming the 'hegemonic responsibilities’ that Britain had previously carried (O'Brien, 1994, p27). The absence of any country prepared to adopt the mantle of international leader created a ‘hegemonic interregnum’ (Clark, 1998, p72). This lack of economic leadership was to prove an 'inherent problem’ (Ferguson, 2009, p165) because it allowed the gold standard system itself to transmit the 'contractionary shocks' of the Wall Street Crash around the world (Archibald & Feldman, 1998, p858).

Europe, which had already seen a large percentage of its financial liquidity diverted to Wall Street (Eichengreen & Portes, 1990, p74), now found that the flow of funds from American loans had ‘dried up’ (Clavin, 2000, p35). Not only was it more difficult for countries to borrow but also there was less gold with which to support national economies as most of it was ‘piled up' in American banks (Cole, 1965, p86). As well as reducing overseas financial commitments the United States government launched a series of ‘beggar-thy-neighbour’ protectionist tariffs designed to improve its own situation but with little regard for international repercussions (Rothermund, 1996, p7). Imposing punitive tariffs to protect domestic industry becomes ‘self-defeating’ as any advantage gained by the first nation to impose import duties is cancelled out by the next (Griffiths & O'Callaghan, 2002, p15). The retaliatory backlash was swift; countries that had imported American goods now taxed them beyond affordability.

American industrial output went unsold; a third of the workforce became unemployed. The ‘catastrophe’ was global. Almost every national economy went into decline, only the degree of the problem varied. Eventually so many countries were sheltering behind protectionist legislation there was no avoiding the collapse of the international financial system and with it the loss of two thirds of the worlds trade (Ferguson, 2009, p159). The notion that unregulated free trade would not only look after itself but also provide continuing ‘universal growth’ now appeared ‘discredited’. Adam Smith’s theory that collective self-interest would always channel market forces in the direction of collective benefit had ‘obviously been upset’ (Rothermund, 1996, p2). The First World War may have prevented the further expansion of economic globalisation but it was the Great Depression that threw it ‘into reverse’ (Legrain, 2003, p91).

One of the few aspects of American life that survived the early years of the depression remarkably well was higher education. University staff who had spent years on fixed salaries suddenly appeared in an enviable position when compared to a world where wages were falling and jobs were getting scarce (Willey, 1937, p3). Across America and throughout Europe the 1929 crash and subsequent depression was followed by a substantial increase in applications for university places (Willey, 1937, p3). Economic uncertainty was making a professional career look more inviting than the somewhat doubtful future offered by commerce (Anderson, 2006, p117). The Germanic university ideal was still overshadowed by the taint of war so it was to the British institutions of Oxford and Cambridge that the Americans looked for both a societal and an architectural model of higher education. They adopted the principle of a balanced but ‘unspecialised’ education, a selected ‘elite’ body of residential students and surroundings that mimicked the ‘English Gothic collegiate style’ (Harrison, 1994, p81).

This chapter has covered the origins of the First World War and how that conflict led to Britain’s universities, particularly the civics being held in greater esteem. America’s decision not to participate in the League of Nations indicated a return to isolationism that left Britain in the role of proxy world hegemon. During this period the British Empire covered a greater geographic area than ever before, giving the universities a greatly increased opportunity for placing graduates in positions of colonial and imperial influence that contributed to the spread ‘Anglobalisation’.

At home Britain's institutions of higher education were operating at full capacity; approximately one third of their funding came from government via the newly formed University Grants Committee. Then in October 1929, greater levels of international financial integration transmitted the effects of America's Wall Street Crash of 1929 around the world. It destabilised the world's financial markets to a disastrous extent, signaling that worse was to come.

Chapter 3 1930-1944

This chapter starts by examining the reluctance of Oxford and Cambridge universities to comply with the government's higher education reforms. It explores how the University of London became Britain's major producer of research graduates and how scientific research in the civic universities was gaining ground in the commercial world. This chapter also deals with the reexamination of UGC support for civic university residential facilities during the economic slump of the 1930's and the British government's decision to free itself from restrictive economic rules by leaving the gold standard. During the considerable international turmoil, which followed, other European nations and eventually America also abandoned the gold standard.

I explore how continuing economic instability and declining international trade caused Italy, Germany and Spain to fall under the influence of ultra nationalistic leaders. Throughout the 1930's, Germany and Italy refused to contain their aggressively expansionist policies and in 1939 Britain and France felt compelled to declare war. From the outset Britain looked to its institutions of higher education for the development of innovative methods of defence and enemy code breaking as well as more destructive weapons. For a year and a half America stood back from the fray but provided funds and equipment through Lend-Lease. After a surprise attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbour, America joined the conflict and almost immediately began preparations for the postwar world. The Anglo-American 'Atlantic Charter' became the basis for the United Nations Organisation and the Bretton Woods agreements, these institutions became the bedrock of modern globalisation and enshrined the US dollar as the new global currency. Britain's own postwar aim was to achieve a more egalitarian society through the creation of a universal welfare system, better housing and planned education.

Oxbridge in the thirties

Much of the modern perception of Oxford and Cambridge universities was created between the wars and reflects the manner in which they portrayed themselves at that time. Both institutions combined patriotic fervour and a pride of empire with their own traditional respect for the past to imbue their universities with a 'sense of place' (Harrison, 1994, p81).

An idyllic setting in which a student might acquire a 'vague' awareness of history, literature, art and a 'few memorable anecdotes' was too often the sum total of an English public school and Oxbridge education (Green, 1977, 132). Oxbridge reveled in the 'quasi-monastic, quasi-conventual' single-sex college life that was subject to innumerable time honoured regulations and equally innumerable infringements (McKibbin, 1998, p249). The popular view of the carefree and languid off-spring of the upper classes moving from cosseted public school to elite university was later cemented by a 'flood' of published works from a variety of authors following the lead of Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, Cyril Connolly and John Betjeman (Anderson, 2006, p120).

This notion of a university as a tradition bound retreat where the sons of the wealthy 'recovered from adolescence' (Harrison, 1994, p91) was not universal but was common enough to be noted by Abraham Flexner, a respected observer of international university education between the wars (McKibbin, 1998, p249). Flexner's published work is credited by Silver as having contributed 'serious analysis' to the study of the 'development' of international higher education (Silver, 2003, p25). Flexner appears to have come to the early conclusion that any attempt to reform Britain's ancient universities was likely to be 'hampered' by 'history, tradition' and 'vested interests' (Flexner, 1930, p35). Moberly states that Flexner's general approach was 'warmly eulogistic' (Moberly, 1949, p233) but this did not stop him describing both Oxford and Cambridge universities as little more than 'advanced secondary schools' (Flexner, 1930, p265). Flexner had difficulty with precisely those values of 'prejudices and customs' that Oxbridge held so dear. He commented that both institutions were veiled by an 'impalpable' shroud of tradition that presented an almost deliberate obstruction to student learning (Flexner, 1930, p265).

McKibbin confirms that the undergraduate teaching of the period consisted 'overwhelmingly' of 'intensive' tutorials that closely resembled the methods found in boarding schools. Awareness that graduate education might be better based on principles of research had been recognised, particularly at Cambridge, but the situation was still 'embryonic' (McKibbin, 1998, p249). Flexner acknowledged the distinction between the two universities when he commented that Oxford seemed less interested in students whose ambitions lay in philosophy, scholarship and science than in those who aspired to the global reach of a career in 'parliament, the civil service, or the dominions' (Flexner, 1930, p265).

Even without Flexner's observations, there were many who recognised that Oxbridge universities were unlikely to meet their 'modern era' responsibilities while they remained preoccupied with their own 'distinguished past' (Silver, 2003, p27). The ancient universities were able to avoid major reform by falling back on reputations for maintaining 'social prestige' rather than intellectual standards (McKibbin, 1998, p248). Most undergraduates were aware that mere association with an Oxbridge university was as useful in launching a career as a good degree (Harrison, 1994, pp91-92). These two ancient institutions were 'bound up' with a past of wealth and privilege (Moberly, 1949, p305) which they presented, during the 1930's, as an element of 'broad humanism' as opposed to the 'narrow professionalism' of the other universities (Halsey, 1958, p65).

The Oxbridge institutions of the period paid as much attention to the process of creating a 'gentlemen' of admirable 'character and physique' as to the exercising of brains (Halsey, 1958, p65). Most undergraduates had a background in public schooling where participation in sports and games was compulsory, so once at university they were able to make a 'fairly conscious choice' about how they might divide their time between physical and academic exercise (Savage, 1927, p76). Such a regime Harrison suggests 'deterred' the 'industrious scholar' from 'over-valuing' academia while providing the enthusiastic sportsman with a 'certain intellectual polish' (Harrison, 1994, p91). Oxbridge never had a 'firmer grasp' on its position at the 'apex' of British university education as it achieved in the years between the wars (Halsey, 1958, p640), even though during that period higher education was not in 'high demand' (Harrison, 1994, p91). The increased student numbers of the early days of the depression had declined as money became tighter and industry had not yet seen the benefit in employing graduates (Anderson, 2006, p116-117). However highly regarded the residential university system may have been, it was very expensive. The well-to-do were not 'obliged' to have their off-spring educated. The elder sons of wealthy businessmen or aristocrats might expect to inherit either the title or the business, younger sons might go into the armed services; often it was only those bound for the church that attended university (Harrison, 1994, p91).

Most undergraduates came from the middle classes, students whom the Oxbridge universities could accommodate with a minimum of 'modification' to their time honoured methods of educating 'gentlemen' (Halsey, 1958, p67).

This was exactly the kind of experience that provided an 'avenue of entry' into a prestigious occupation in the civil service or colonial administration (Halsey, 1958, p67). Halsey states that the 'high value' placed upon Oxbridge graduates by other countries was a 'powerful validation' of an education based upon 'classical studies and the liberal arts' (Halsey, 1958, p67). If the graduates were valued then so were the institutes that had produced them. The Oxbridge universities were to provide a model for institutions of higher education throughout Britain and the dominions (McKibbin, 1998, p250). Balogh argues that in some less well-developed countries it might have been wiser to adopt a model that would better integrate with the community rather than reproducing an 'ill-fitting' elitist system that would ultimately only create a 'class apart' (Balogh, 1955, p265).

Although the idea of Oxford and Cambridge universities is often merged and referred to in 'academic shorthand' as Oxbridge, they are of course two different entities (McKibbin, 1998, p249). While maintaining their individuality, the two universities have sometimes been joined in common cause. In 1935 a joint committee was founded to avoid the 'unnecessary duplication of academic courses and research'. There was also a joint 'isolationist' stance in regard to the newer civic universities. Both institutions subscribed in principle to the 'Universities' Bureau of the British Empire'. However, Halsey argues that this nominal presence was simply to ensure that the bureau could not be dominated by the University of London (Halsey, 1992, p69).

The University of London in the thirties

Oxbridge could not avoid noticing the increasing prestige of the University of London. Although still primarily an examining body, its area of authority encompassed the otherwise autonomous institutions of University College, King's College, the College of Household Science, Imperial College, the London School of Economics and a 'dozen teaching hospitals' (McKibbin, 1998, p250). Calculated purely on student numbers London had become the largest university in Europe as well as being widely acknowledged as southern-most tip of the 'golden triangle' that made up the London-Oxford-Cambridge 'axis' (Anderson, 2006, p65; Halsey, 1958, p64). This increased credibility was, in part, due to the university finally acquiring a permanent campus in 1927.

An eleven-acre site adjacent to Bloomsbury had been purchased by the university authorities with some ‘lavish assistance’ from the Rockefeller Foundation (McKibbin, 1998, p250). The campus, and much of the surrounding neighbourhood is overshadowed by an immense ‘beached whale' of a building that is the university’s Senate House (McKibbin, 1998, p250). This newly acquired physical presence granted the University of London, and the institutions and colleges that fell within its jurisdiction, a ‘much greater authority’ (Vernon, 2004, p178). The University, now with a ‘magnificent sense of its own identity’, set about coordinating and standardising the methods of universities that were outside of its official orbit (Vernon, 2004, p178). This was a step too far for the ever-critical Abraham Flexner, who looked carefully into the administration of the University of London and pronounced that it would do well to first reorganise itself (Silver, 2003, p26). Flexner argued that it could never be a ‘real’ modern spirited university, that London and the Empire could be proud of, until it had shed responsibility for the assorted technical and medical schools whose many external students it could never assimilate (Flexner, 1930, pp246-247).

Flexner's ‘critique’ may have prompted British universities to seek ‘more intellectual rigour’ (Anderson, 2006, p124) but the University of London remained the ‘powerful’ hub of many other colleges and institutions (Anderson, 2006, p65). During the 1930’s the university established affiliated institutes of Historical Research and of Archaeology. These provided London with a ‘framework for post-graduate research’ that was unavailable in other English universities. With post-war Germany’s PhD courses ‘closed’, London University became a viable alternative to overseas students who wanted to do doctoral research. During the inter-war period, more students graduated from London University with research degrees than from any other university in the country (McKibbin, 1998, p251).

The civic universities in the thirties

The civic universities did not appreciate being seen as providers of a merely ‘non-conformist provincial’ higher education (Halsey, 1958, p66). They had greatly expanded their specialist facilities, their staff were encouraged to undertake meaningful research, academic rigor had been enhanced and their scientific progress frequently outpaced that of the commercial world (Halsey, 1958, p65).

Researchers at the two ancient institutions considered it in their interest to keep abreast of the work of the civic university specialist departments. After an Oxford ‘raid’ in which two of Manchester's leading organic chemists were lured away it was claimed that the ancient foundation viewed Manchester as a ‘first-class waiting room’ (Halsey, 1992, p71).

Despite this back-handed acknowledgement that the civic universities had achieved technological pre-eminence, the ancient institutions refused to accept that it presented any ‘serious challenge’ to their long standing prestige (Barnes, 1996, p283). It was this monopoly of status that rankled with the civics and encouraged them to slowly adjust their range and approach to studies so as to conform to the ‘norms’ of Oxbridge (Halsey, 1992, p71). This strategy was particularly ironic when adopted by those institutions founded as both an alternative and a ‘conscious reaction’ to the dominance of Oxbridge (McKibbin, 1998, p250). That the Oxford-Cambridge ‘ethos’ was so pervasive in the civics should come as no surprise (Anderson, 2006, p117); since their earliest days they had been staffed to a ‘very large extent’ by Oxford and Cambridge graduates (Flexner, 1930, p256). The recruits brought with them ‘traditional notions’ that would ensure that the development of the civic universities was at least ‘partially informed’ by Oxbridge sensibilities (Halsey, 1958, p67).

Had it been possible for any of the civic universities to convincingly reproduce the whole ‘Oxbridge-type experience’ it would almost certainly have been inappropriate (Moberly, 1949, p305). The civics were intended to meet local needs, and their reliance upon local funding virtually guaranteed the provision of technical training that suited their benefactors. Flexner commented that 'technical development' in civic institutions was in danger of becoming more 'highly developed' and specialised than might be expected of a university. He was critical of programmes that included subjects like photography, brewing, dyeing and glass making. He decried courses in librarianship, journalism, civic design and automobile engineering as 'short-sighted and absurd'. Flexner thought it ‘deplorable’ that the civics granted diplomas and certificates in subjects that were 'largely technical in character' (Flexner, 1930, p255). When published, Flexner’s analysis was greeted as a work of ‘pioneering scholarship’ (Silver, 2003, p27). It ‘reinforced’ the view among observers of higher education, particularly those at Oxbridge, that only the ancients were capable of providing a ‘real' university education (Vernon, 2004, p178).

The qualities by which an 'elite' institution transformed undergraduates into potential 'leaders of society' were various but it was felt that the residential campus was a significant contribution (Anderson, 2006, p122) To this end the civics were encouraged to think in terms of communities, to increase the development of ‘unions, refectories and staff houses’ (Moberly, 1949, p305). Barnes states that the UGC, while largely ‘sympathetic’, was critical of the lack of residential facilities at civic universities (Barnes, 1996, p282). The members of the UGC firmly supported the notion that education was as much about developing the community as the intellect and actively encouraged Reading University and its ‘halls of residence movement’ (Anderson, 2006, p122). Reading University was chartered in 1926, the only institution to be elevated between the wars (McKibbin, 1998, p252). Vernon states that Reading's promotion owed a great deal to its ‘remarkably well-developed residential system’ (Vernon, 2004, p178).

Other civic universities may have had ambitions to provide halls of residence but along with similar plans they were abandoned as Britain entered an economic downturn. The downturn became the 1930’s depression, businesses went bankrupt and ‘staple industries’ slumped. Sources of funding that had long been relied upon by the civics evaporated and the prospects for new endowments were non-existent (Anderson, 2006, p117). The civics now not only lacked the resources for residential centres, libraries and laboratories (Halsey, 1992, p71) but they could not even recruit ‘good staff’ (Silver, 2003, p27).

The increase in student numbers signaled by the first days of the depression had proved temporary (Anderson, 2006, p117) and soon settled at a ‘plateau’ of approximately thirty-five thousand full time students (Halsey, 1958, p68). This represented less than two percent of the eligible population (Anderson, 2006, p116). The respect accorded the civic universities during the 1920’s was evaporating and the 1930’s became a ‘demoralizing period’ of restricted funds, reduced student numbers, ‘self-criticism and low esteem’ (Barnes, 1996, p283).

MacDonald’s second premiership

The minority Labour government that was returned to office in 1929 produced no effective response to the economic crisis that followed the Wall Street Crash (Dow, 1998, p136).

Ramsay MacDonald attempted to placate the trades unions by increasing dole payments (Bassett, 1958, p43) and by establishing a committee to explore possible solutions to rapidly rising unemployment (McElwee, 1962, p158). The committee met only twice and although the chairman claimed to have various progressive ideas ‘up his sleeve’ Havighurst states that is where they stayed (Havighurst, 1966, p214). The government's ‘star turn’ was George Lansbury, who ordered the removal of railings around the Serpentine in Hyde Park so that the waterway might be used for mixed bathing (McElwee, 1962, p164). Mowat describes 'Lansbury's Lido' as this administration’s ‘one lasting memorial’ (Mowat, 1955, p356).

Labour’s first year in office did little beyond adding another four hundred thousand to the jobless total (Havighurst, 1966, p214). In July 1931, an all-party investigation of the national economy announced that the only way to save Britain from disaster was to immediately reduce public expenditure. They recommended a number of cuts including a twenty percent reduction in unemployment benefit (Seaman, 1991, p218) which was racking up debt at the rate of forty million pounds a year (Bassett, 1958, p44). MacDonald knew that the parliamentary Labour party would never agree to reduce unemployment benefit (Bassett, 1958, p64) and nor was he going to fight them over it (Seaman, 1991, p220). On the morning of Sunday August 23rd, MacDonald went to Buckingham Palace to notify George V that his cabinet’s refusal to approve the reductions would force the government’s resignation (Mowat, 1955, p391).

The king summoned Conservative and Liberal leaders to the palace (Seaman, 1991, p220) and they proceeded to discuss the possibility of representatives of all three parties serving in a National government which could provide the joint expertise to cope with the current economic crisis as well as generating a spirit of ‘national unity' (Clavin, 2000, p30). MacDonald would remain as Premier of the administration because the Conservatives preferred that a Labour leader announce the approaching ‘unpalatable economies’ (Mowat, 1955, p391).

On Monday 24th August MacDonald met with his cabinet and announced to their ‘utter stupefaction’ that they were ‘out’ and ‘he was in’ (Mowat, 1955, p393). The formal resignation of the Labour government was tendered at the palace that very Monday afternoon (Havighurst, 1966, p223) and the change to National Government, with MacDonald as Prime Minister, was announced at 9.15 that evening (Mowat, 1955, p393).

MacDonald's new 'national' cabinet featured the sixty-four year old Conservative leader, Stanley Baldwin and just three members of the previous Labour cabinet (Havighurst, 1966, p223), MacDonald's 'defection' to this Conservative dominated administration created much ill feeling and a long-term loss of morale in the Labour movement (Jupp, 1982, p4).

Britain forced off gold

The national government had been formed to deal with an emergency and now had to act quickly (Powell, 2004, p126). The dramatic reductions in spending were eventually diluted to a ten percent cut across all expenditure including unemployment benefits (Mowat, 1955, p402). Effective recovery from the economic depression was dependent upon a revival of international trade. The reinstatement of the gold standard had been central to Tory plans for increased exports and the provision of British jobs, albeit at reduced wages. These aims, however, were 'largely frustrated' by a significant change in the social landscape (Pugh, 2006, p47). No longer could governments opt for an economic policy which relied upon employers cutting workers wages because the trades unions would attempt to prevent it (Ferguson, 2009, p161).

Workers wages were the only adjustable element in the gold standard mechanism. If the government were denied that adjustment then Britain could not remain on the gold standard. On September 19th 1931, the Bank of England requested a suspension of gold convertibility (Mowat, 1955, p403).

This second incarnation of the gold standard had not been a success; it had done little to revive the pre-war global trading system (Bernstein, 2000, p326) but had succeeded in transmitting America's economic instability throughout the industrialised world (Kessler, 2005, p138). Before the national government had a chance to publish its budget or pass an economy bill it had to announce an abandonment of the gold standard (Mowat, 1955, p403). The expected furore did not materialise. Britain left the international exchange mechanism that it had itself devised with hardly a murmur (Mowat, 1955, p404).

Within days twenty-four other countries had also 'suspended convertibility' of their currencies into gold (Bernstein, 2000, p315). Many of those who left the system did so because their own economies were closely connected to that of Britain.

This led to the formation of a new grouping of countries that traded within the 'sterling bloc' (Clavin, 2000, p37). Soon becoming reliant upon each other as trading partners, the sterling bloc comprised the British Empire and Commonwealth countries and Scandinavia (Mowat, 1955, p436). The main aim of the national government was to demonstrate some level of 'domestic economic recovery'; indeed as the money supply was 'unshackled' from the constraints of the gold standard it did once again begin to turn the wheels of industry (Kessler, 2005, p138). Britain was one of the first countries to show evidence of recovery from the Great Depression (Clavin, 2000, p37). As each of the remaining gold standard countries turned their backs on the system, so began their economic recovery (Ferguson, 2001, p336; Weber, 2007, p135).

The price for Britain's improved trading position was a significant weakening of the hitherto overvalued pound (Bernstein, 2000, p315). Conservative backbenchers urged an election; they desperately wanted to introduce protective import tariffs (Mowat, 1955, p406) before sterling found a permanently lower level on the international money markets (Youngs et al, 1999, p402). The backbench calls were heeded and an election was called for October 27th 1931. The national government was returned with a landslide five hundred and fifty six seats, though as four hundred and seventy one of these were Conservative, it was in effect a win for Baldwin (Havighurst, 1966, p224). The Labour Party, still 'shattered by MacDonald's betrayal' (Youngs et al, 1999, p402), was all but wiped out by a 'torrent of anti-socialism' (Howe, 1997, p283).

MacDonald was allowed to remain as 'puppet Premier' (Jones, 2010) while Baldwin and Chamberlain, having resolved to maintain the 'National façade', set about forming a cabinet (Seaman, 1991, p224). Baldwin considered that he now had a mandate to do what he thought was necessary – and that was to tax foreign imports (Baldwin, 1955, p170). In February of 1932 Neville Chamberlain, now at the Exchequer, announced that all imports except food, raw materials and empire goods would incur a ten percent duty (Havighurst, 1966, p234). This rose to sixty percent for cutlery, typewriters, woolen and cotton items, paper, bottles, cameras, and electrical appliances (Mowat, 1955, p415). There was little objection. No one was prepared to stand against the Cabinet's 'strong man', the haughty and distant Neville Chamberlain (Mowat, 1955, p414). Thus MacDonald and Baldwin's administration 'shambled its unimaginative way' through the 1930's (Mowat, 1955, p413).

It was, in effect, a ‘one-party system’ masquerading as a national government but it was far from the ‘one-party state’ of the sort that was coming to the fore in some continental countries (Seaman, 1991, p231).

Fascism in Europe

The years between the wars have been described as Europe’s ‘age of fascism’ (Blum, 1998, p3). The First World War came to a sudden, muddled and unsatisfactory end; it was closely followed by the hardship of economic depression. Europe’s political systems seemed incapable of dealing with domestic problems such as poverty and unemployment and often further alienated their own populations by continuing to invest abroad and by seeking international, rather than national solutions. This growing discontent created a crisis of public confidence that, in some cases, allowed charismatic ultra nationalist leaders who normally occupied the political fringes to seize power (Berlet, 1992; Lyons, 2010). Morgan argues that the origins and influences that became the foundations of ‘fascism’ can be traced back to Europe’s pre-war ‘turn-of-the-century counter-culture' (Morgan, 2002, p16). This mix of café and club society was populated by avant-garde writers, artists and intellectuals who rejected mainstream notions of progress and instead championed philosophies of nationalism and ‘radical’ conservatism (Morgan, 2002, p17).

Such political views became more extreme when blended with the pseudosciences of phrenology and spiritualism and were frequently ‘tinged’ with social Darwinism (Blum, 1998, p4).

Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution was published in ‘On the Origin of Species’ in 1859. Within three years social scientist and writer Herbert Spencer had applied Darwin’s theory to human society and coined the phrase ‘survival of the fittest’ to describe a worldview in which ‘entire races’ competed for survival (Pauley, 2003, p9). Extremist politicians and ‘pseudo-scientists’ went on to distort Darwin’s ideas almost ‘beyond recognition’ in their efforts to discover ‘evidence’ of the cultural and racial superiority of white Europeans (Ferguson, 2003, p263). The concept of ‘Social Darwinism’ was honed by a series of 'respected' authors until it became ‘sufficiently elastic to justify or explain anything’ (Jones, 1998, p6).

Charles Darwin's cousin Francis Galton (Sewell, 2009), a Cambridge mathematician, compared photographs of people of African and Asiatic origin to those of criminals and 'other degenerate types' to illustrate his theories on racial intelligence. Galton single handedly transformed social Darwinism into the 'scientific snake-oil' that became internationally accepted as 'eugenics' (Ferguson, 2003, p264). This was an entirely bogus 'science' that was given an additional veneer of academic respectability when, in 1911, University College London appointed its first Galton Professor of Eugenics (Ferguson, 2003, p264). Europe's Fascist regimes would later 'embrace' both social Darwinism and eugenics. Their leaders were glorified as best fitted to their role because they had 'struggled to the top' (Adams & Dyson, 2003, p179). Italian Fascists cited eugenics as evidence for selective breeding. Mussolini's 'difesa della stirpe', the 'defence of the stock' would become an important element of Fascist ideology by the 1930's (Stepan, 1991, p117).

Mussolini used his occupation as newspaper editor to draw Italy's unemployed 1918 war veterans together and to ferment an 'inordinate fear' of an armed uprising (Fermi, 1966, p153). By March 1919, Mussolini had founded the 'Fascio di Combattimento' - literally 'the combat group', ostensibly to save Italy from revolution (Pauley, 2003, p25). The word 'Fasci' from which 'Fascist' was derived described a bundle of sticks bound around an axe – an ancient Roman badge of office that had been invoked by previous Italian revolutionary groups (Blum, 1998, p5). Mussolini's Fascist Party adopted other symbolic gestures from a variety of sources, the straight-arm salute of ancient Rome (Howells, 2011, p1), the wearing of black shirts from the anarchists of northern Italy and the flag of the Italian Army Commandos (Hibbert, 1962, p29).

Within two years the Fascists could officially boast over a quarter million members, they were becoming a 'mass movement' (Blum, 1998, p22). In the 1921 election they won thirty-five seats (Pauley, 2003, p26). Mussolini was now the leader of a legitimate political party and on his way to becoming a national figure (Hibbert, 1962, p31). The Blackshirts extended their regime of intimidation and violence to territories they were unable to gain via the ballot box (Blum, 1998, p6). Italy's network of largely socialist local government offices were administratively crippled by a series of deliberately destabilising attacks (Hibbert, 1962, p28). This enabled Mussolini to announce that if the country's elected representatives were incapable of governing, he and his Blackshirts would 'March on Rome' and seize power (Pauley, 2003, p26).

Neither the police nor the army made any attempt to prevent the Blackshirts from reaching the capital. On arrival Mussolini accepted the invitation of King Victor Emmanuel to form a government (Blum, 1998, p24). During the following months Mussolini's political rivals ominously disappeared and Fascist opposition ceased, national turmoil subsided and most Italian people were of the opinion that Il Duce could do no wrong (Hibbert, 1962, p40). Italy was moving out of the doldrums as its new leader proclaimed that large scale industrial projects would be developed to provide the 'economic muscle' on which national unity depended (Morgan, 2002, p19). However the often-quoted boast that Mussolini was able to so regulate Italian life that the trains ran on time is a myth (Ward, 1978, p262). Benito Mussolini, self-styled Il Duce, had become the world's first Fascist dictator; the word 'totalitarian' was coined as a descriptor for his regime (Adams & Dyson, 2003, p178).

Adolf Hitler, the ambitious leader of an extremist political group in Germany was 'an admirer' of Mussolini and his achievements (Rejai, 1991, p60). The success of Il Duce inspired Hitler's group to make their own 'bid for power' (Blum, 1998, p27). In 1923 they launched an incredibly ill conceived coup without significant military or political backing. Their attempted kidnapping of three prominent government officials ended in a gunfight with the police (Rosenberg, 2011a, p1). Hitler was arrested, tried and sentenced to a five-year prison term in a 'large pleasant room' in the Landsberg prison (Eubank, 2004, p27). Here he dictated the first volume of his memoir, 'Mein Kampf' to his loyal scribe Rudolf Hess (Welch, 1998, p18). After serving only nine months Hitler's political allies saw to it that he was paroled (Rosenberg, 2011).

Hitler's rise to political prominence had started in 1919 when as a destitute war veteran he had been paid to spy on the activities the extremist German Workers Party (Welch, 1998, p11). Within a month he had abandoned his low key monitoring and was addressing the group at meetings (Welch, 1998, p11). Hitler was a 'mesmerising performer' (Rejai, 1991, p60); he was a 'thoroughgoing hysteric' who had the ability to transmit his 'absolute faith' in himself to his audience (Machtan, 2001, p123). By 1920 Hitler was party secretary and the movement had added 'National Socialist' to the 'German Workers Party' becoming the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei. They would be known as the Nazi Party (Welch, 1998, p11).

Hitler's speeches fulfilled his audience's need for confirmation of the injustice of the Versailles treaty, and of the subversive behavior of Bolsheviks and Jews (Eubank, 2004, p26). Any dissenting voices were swiftly dealt with by Hitler's 'strong bodyguard' (Binchy, 1933, p37). By February 1920, Hitler's oratory was drawing enthusiastic crowds of over two thousand – he had 'found his platform' (Binchy, 1933, p37). During July 1921, Hitler became Nazi party president with 'unlimited powers' (Blum, 1998, p27). Hitler's first act was to transform his 'bodyguard' into brown shirted 'storm trooper' paramilitaries (Marzani, 1990, p5).

Hitler was released from prison having created a sufficiently strong 'personality cult' to cast himself as the central 'Führerfigure' that he believed must be the focus of an aspirant national movement (Welch, 1998, p16). The botched coup made it obvious that the Nazi Party could not succeed by violence alone. Early in 1925 Hitler began to think about adopting the more conventional elements of the 'constitutional process' (Pearson, 2008, p29). Hitler relentlessly lambasted the Weimar Republic as the source of Germany's 'political humiliation and economic failure' while promoting the 'quasi-religious' myth of himself as the all-powerful Fuhrer (Welch, 1998, p23). The 'receptive ability' of a mass audience, wrote Hitler, is 'very limited', 'effective propaganda' must restrict itself to the dramatic repetition of a 'very few points' (Hitler, 1939, p234). To this the Nazi Party added the theatrics of torch lit parades, uniforms, elaborate banners and military bands, the dramatic result 'captured the imagination of the masses' (Welch, 1998, p27). In the 1932 election the Nazi's won thirty seven percent of the vote to become the largest party in the Reichstag (Simkin, 1997).

On January 30, 1933, Germany's President Hindenburg invited Hitler to become Chancellor (Rosenberg, 2011). Hitler accepted and began taking Germany 'towards a dictatorship' (Pearson, 2008, p29). The German constitution was suspended and the Reich Cabinet awarded itself 'unlimited' power (Pearson, 2008, p29). Hitler was no longer concerned with the opinion of the electorate, he did not intend there to be another election for a 'thousand years' (Wiskemann, 2008, p494).

Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler finally met in 1934. Hitler flew to Venice at Mussolini's invitation to discuss the Nazi plans for Austria, part of which was now Italian territory.

Mussolini was scornful of the Nazi's vision of themselves as a master race and was convinced that they envied Italy's 'thirty centuries of history' (Hibbert, 1962, p76). Hitler's plane was met by Il Duce, who wore a ceremonial uniform with much gold braid, a dagger and silver spurs (Hibbert, 1962, p77). Hitler, stepped from his plane in a rumpled mackintosh, blue serge suit and clutching a floppy felt hat (Hibbert, 1962, p77). He 'was embarrassed' (Knickerbocker, 1941, p5) and Mussolini 'disliked him' from the first (Hibbert, 1962, p77).

The visit lasted three days and included several conferences as well as official tours and concerts, Mussolini quickly tired of the 'idiotic' ranting about racial supremacy (Hibbert, 1962, p76). At one stage a difference of opinion developed into a loud argument, which had the two dictators 'barking' at each other like 'two mastiffs' (Hibbert, 1962, p77). They each led violent authoritarian regimes but had little else in common; Hitler's favourite film would be Gary Cooper in 'The Lives of a Bengal Lancer' (Ferguson, 2003, p334) while Mussolini preferred the comedies of Laurel and Hardy (Hibbert, 1962, p44). H. R. Knickerbocker, who witnessed the awkward Venice encounter, described Adolf Hitler as a pretentious actor whose villainy was only recognised after he started 'shooting at his audience' (Knickerbocker, 1941, p2).

Chamberlain's troubled premiership

As the influence of the German-Italian fascist 'menace' spread across continental Europe (Churchill 1948 p284) Britain's financial problems were beginning to dissipate; the 'worst of the depression' appeared to be over (Mowat, 1955, p532). In June, Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin exchanged government posts making Baldwin Prime Minister, although Neville Chamberlain continued to guide policy (Mowat, 1955, p534). Those policies were tested when in July, Nazi Germany introduced compulsory military service and began rearming (Mowat, 1955, p539) and again in October when Italian forces invaded the African country of Ethiopia. Chamberlain attended a League of Nations tribunal at which Hitler's infractions were set aside as 'domestic' and some inconsequential sanctions were imposed on Italy (Brierly, 2008, p259). Britain and France, as the most influential members of the League advised against 'strong action' for fear of alienating Italy and driving Mussolini into closer cooperation with Hitler (Kaarbo & Ray, 2005, p42). Baldwin believed in the League, 'up to a point', but thought it prudent to start a rearmament programme (Mowat, 1955, p536).

The increase in weapons manufacture created a ‘significant rise’ in employment (Morgan, 2000, pp36-39). In May 1936, came the news that Ethiopia’s ill-trained and poorly equipped troops had been defeated. Mussolini claimed Ethiopia in the name of his new Italian ‘Fascist empire’ (Mowat, 1955, p561). Mussolini’s use of aircraft for the ‘indiscriminate’ dispersal of poison gas during the conflict (Brierly, 2008, p260) prompted the British Home Office to publish its first air raid precautions booklet (Mowat, 1955, p535).

Baldwin resigned the premiership in May 1937. Chamberlain became Prime Minister just as the intentions of Italy, Germany and Japan were starting to dominate the political landscape. All three countries had recently resigned their membership of the League of Nations and all three denied any sinister intent (Mowat, 1955, p586). Chamberlain suffered the ‘unfortunate illusion’ that these countries were led by ‘reasonable men’ who could be trusted (Kitchen, 1990, p3). Two million Britain’s, who did not share Chamberlain’s faith, made space in the back garden for a sheet steel ‘Anderson’ air raid shelter (Havighurst, 1966, p286).

Despite assurances to the contrary, Nazi troops crossed the border into Austria on March 11th, 1938. Two days later Hitler made a ‘victorious’ entry into Vienna (Mowat, 1955, p600) and Austria was incorporated into Germany as a new province named ‘Ostmark’ (Kitchen, 1990, p5). Hitler next turned to the Sudetenland, a German-speaking region of Czechoslovakia that had once been part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire (Edgerton, 2011, p30). Chamberlain felt moved to protest that previously agreed international borders were being violated (Morgan, 2000, p42). Hitler invited Chamberlain and France’s Édouard Daladier to Munich to discuss the Sudetenland. Fearing that obstructing Hitler would prompt war, the British and French leaders agreed to step aside and allow a German annexation of the Sudetenland (Kitchen, 1990, p8). Chamberlain, knowing his acquiescence would result in a hostile reception in London, asked Hitler to sign a declaration of Anglo-German friendship. Chamberlain produced this paper on his arrival back in Britain and read aloud that the agreement was ‘symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again’ (Hoggan, 1989, p90).

Chamberlain seemed to have achieved 'peace with honour' and was received as a hero (Kitchen, 1990, p8). Then in early October the Nazi’s began bombing Prague; the ‘obstinate’ Czechs had refused to abide by an agreement in which they took no part (Kitchen, 1990, p8).

Suddenly ‘peace with honour’ looked like an ‘abdication of responsibility’ and it was critics like Churchill who appeared more in step with ‘popular sentiment’ (Morgan, 2000, p42). That Chamberlain was able to promote ‘reasonable’ appeasement while accelerating the rearmament programme made little difference to the British public (Edgerton, 2011, p30). They saw only a weak Prime Minister who had been duped by a Fascist dictator (Morgan, 2000, p42).

Britain declares war

By March Czechoslovakia had been over run and Hitler claimed the country as the 'German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia'. It was an audacious act that served Britain by bringing the Dominions 'on side' (McKibbin, 2007, p51). Their reluctance to become involved in Britain’s European arguments was overcome by a 'moral repugnance' for Hitler and Nazism (McKibbin, 2007, p51). They also expressed concern that no more territory should fall under German rule, Chamberlain, eager to present a united empire front was 'stampeded’ into taking a stand. He assured the Dominions that Britain would defend Poland should it come under the Nazi threat (Morgan, 2000, p43).

Hitler invaded Poland on September 1st 1939 (Morgan, 2000, p43) having first agreed a Nazi/Soviet non-aggression pact with Stalin who wanted a Polish thoroughfare to the Baltic (Kitchen, 1990, p9). On September 3rd Chamberlain was under pressure to make good his pledge to Poland and so sent an ultimatum to Hitler. He demanded that German troops be withdrawn from Poland by eleven that morning or war would follow. The troops did not stand down and later that day Chamberlain broadcast to the nation that Britain and Germany were at war (Morgan, 2000, p43). There was in reality little that could be done to save Poland and by September 17th it had been overwhelmed and partitioned into German and Russian portions (Havighurst, 1966, p287). In October the half a million troops that comprised the British expeditionary force were sent to France where they were positioned along the Belgian border (Kitchen, 1990, p24). At home the winter of 1939 became a period of civilian and military preparation that seemed so anticlimactic as to become known as the ‘phony war’ (Havighurst, 1966, p288).

From the first days of the war America’s President Roosevelt had made it very clear that his country would remain neutral. However both the President and the American industrialists were keen to export all they could to Britain without violating the Neutrality Act (Kitchen, 1990, p36).

Roosevelt did encourage an infringement by pointing out that unassembled ‘instruments of war' could be legally exported to a belligerent country (Kitchen, 1990, p37). When concerns were raised that America was being drawn into a foreign conflict, Roosevelt explained that supporting the British war effort did, in effect, defend America (Clarke, 2008, p11). The President was wholly against Hitler’s Nazi regime and wanted to see it overthrown. Whenever Joseph Kennedy, American ambassador to London, recommended that Roosevelt and Hitler come to terms he was dismissed as 'a pain in the neck' (Kitchen, 1990, p36).

On April 4th, 1940, Neville Chamberlain smugly announced that all Britain’s defences were up to strength and that Hitler had ’missed the bus’ (Kitchen, 1990, p207). Just five days later Germany invaded Norway and a British military base there was easily overrun (Morgan, 2000, p47). Chamberlain’s detractors multiplied, not only in the House but also in the streets; the public detected the sense of ‘total failure’ (Havighurst, 1966, p292). Chamberlain clung to office for another month but after eighty of his own MP’s voted against him in the House he admitted defeat and resigned. He died just six months later (Morgan, 2000, p47).

Churchill becomes Prime Minister

The outgoing Prime Minister advised the king to call upon Winston Churchill to head the new government (Havighurst, 1966, p293). Churchill may not have been the obvious choice but his ‘inspiring oratory’ and traditional patriotism might be required to summon the ‘reserves of national will-power’ (Morgan, 2000, p47). Importantly, he was not seen as one of the ‘old regime’ that had so misjudged Hitler and Mussolini (Havighurst, 1966, p294). Churchill commanded cross party support and had no trouble putting together what he called a ‘National Coalition’ government that included eight Labour ministers; his five member ‘War Cabinet’ included ‘unassuming’ Labour leader, Clement Attlee, as Deputy Prime Minister (Carter, 1997, p554). While Churchill dealt with the actual prosecution of the war, Attlee became the ‘most powerful figure on the home front’ (Dutton, 1997, p63). Together with the coalition’s other Labour ministers, Attlee played a ‘highly visible and constructive’ role in planning for a post war Britain (Carter, 1997, p554). Massive reforms in housing and education were planned as well as the surreptitious laying of foundations for a post-war ‘welfare state’ (Kitchen, 1990, pp208-210).

On the same day as Churchill became Prime Minister, Hitler began his westward ‘march of conquest’ with invasions of Holland and Belgium (Kitchen, 1990, p24). By May 14th the Dutch army had surrendered and with the Belgians fairing no better, the Germans turned their attention to France (Morgan, 2000, p47). The Allied defence force and the opposing invaders were roughly equal in manpower but the Germans had air superiority. The Allies were conducting a ‘purely defensive campaign’ that was being hampered by a ‘woefully deficient’ French communications system (Kitchen, 1990, p25) By May 23rd German armoured columns had crossed France and reached the channel coast. The British Expeditionary Force were now fighting in a narrow corridor that only led toward the sea (Havighurst, 1966, p295). On May 24th the French army ‘broke up in disorderly retreat’ (Morgan, 2000, p47) and the order was issued for the British troops to ‘retreat across the Channel’ (Kitchen, 1990, p27). Called 'Operation Dynamo' the evacuation from the beaches of Dunkirk was an ‘organisational triumph’. Three hundred and forty thousand men were transported back to Britain in a naval and commercial fleet that even included pleasure craft (Havighurst, 1966, p295). The exercise rescued ten times the number of men that even Churchill had hoped for. A near miracle transformed a ‘shattering defeat’ into the stuff of legend; the 'spirit of Dunkirk' passed into national mythology (Kitchen, 1990, p28)

Churchill’s radio broadcast of June 18th proclaimed the Battle of France to be over, and the Battle of Britain beginning (Havighurst, 1966, p296). German aircraft started bombing London that very night, and would be attacking somewhere in Britain every night for months to come (Havighurst, 1966, p299). This aerial bombardment known as the ‘Blitz’ was intended to destroy civilian morale prior to invasion (Havighurst, 1966, p304). At the same time on the French coast barges and landing craft were being assembled to ferry troops across the channel. The invasion was set for September 21st and on August 1st Hitler gave the order to commence the destruction of the RAF, radar stations, the docks, shipping and industrial centres (Havighurst, 1966, p299). ‘Wave after wave’ of Luftwaffe bombers and fighter aircraft crossed the British coast (Morgan, 2000, p48). They were met by anti-aircraft fire from the ground and in air-to-air combat by RAF Spitfires and Hurricanes. Britain’s, Poles, Czechs, and Canadians piloted these fighters with a mix of skill and recklessness that inflicted disproportionately heavy losses on the German flyers (Morgan, 2000, p48). The battle in the air lasted until early September with German fatalities more than double those of the RAF and escalating (Havighurst, 1966, p300).

Then on September 14th Hitler cancelled the whole operation. The Luftwaffe had not been able to destroy the RAF and was suffering catastrophic losses that Germany could no longer afford. The following weeks saw the invasion fleet dismantled and by the end of September the British high command were prepared to tell Churchill that the Battle of Britain had been won (Havighurst, 1966, p303).

This was to be the period that lodged in the national memory, when the British people 'stood alone' and won the day against a brutish and better-prepared foe. Kitchen argues that this is 'almost pure myth'; Britain did not stand alone but was supported, not always willingly, by the vast populations of the countries of the empire (Kitchen, 1990, p218). From its essentially European beginnings the war had 'rapidly turned into a broader effort'. Troops from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and again, vitally, from India were drafted into the conflict (Morgan, 2000, p49). There were British military installations and communication stations all over the world that required defending.

A large number of British bases were in the Middle East paying special attention to the Suez Canal and the oil fields of Persia (Morgan, 2000, p50). The numerous independence movements within the countries of the empire eagerly received reports of Britain's near bankruptcy and military defeats. They were cheered by the knowledge that their imperial masters were not infallible (Kitchen, 1990, p218).

Lend-Lease and the 'Atlantic Charter'

In February, while the bombs were still falling, the BBC transmitted a speech from Churchill that was relayed to its intended audience in America. After praising the United States for its assistance in a noble cause he finished, 'put your faith in us... give us the tools and we will finish the job'. Roosevelt was aware of Britain's financial position and knew that the stress was on the word 'give' (Edgerton, 2011, p74). In March, the American Congress passed the 'lend-lease' bill. Although one senator commented that the idea of loaning military equipment was as 'absurd' as loaning chewing gum, once used, neither was worth having back (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011, p12) The senator had missed the shrewdness of Roosevelt's 'masterstroke' - supplies that were either 'on loan' or were being 'leased' would never actually be owned by the belligerent country and would not therefore contravene the Neutrality Act (Clarke, 2008, p10).

Roosevelt provided great assistance to Britain. Not only in providing the Lend-Lease lifeline but also in ensuring that supplies were safely shipped in convoys escorted in part by the US navy (Brogan, 2008, p581). America also ‘accepted’ long term ‘rent-free bases’ on British possessions like Bermuda and Guyana in return for a donation of fifty American destroyers (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011, p11). Here was ‘neutrality of a totally novel kind’ (Brogan, 2008, p581). The President brought America as ‘close to direct involvement’ as a ‘neutral’ country dare get (Wasserstein, 2007, p325). He and Churchill arranged to meet to discuss ‘precise peace aims’ (Louis, 1978, p130). The occasion required the Prime Minister to cross the Atlantic by battleship and rendezvous with the American carrier USS Augusta off the coast of Newfoundland (Smellie, 1962, p356). Churchill himself admitted that this was premature as the end of the war was as yet not in sight (Louis, 1978, p130), but the talks reached a conclusion which was later described by the London Daily Herald as an 'Atlantic Charter' (Kelly, 2011). The document was not a charter, but simply a ‘press release’ issued by Roosevelt and Churchill to describe their plans for the post war world. Roosevelt specifically avoided a more formal framework to prevent it being ‘interpreted as an alliance’ (Louis, 1978, p122). The President held the traditional American distrust of colonialism and British imperialists who would colonise every available island, harbour, ‘rock or a sandbar' in the interest of empire (Judd, 1996, p319).

These misgivings were carried into the drafting of the declaration, which stated categorically that ‘all peoples’ had the right to choose their own ‘form of government’ (Louis, 1978, p123). This was a reworking of a clause in a First World War pronouncement by Woodrow Wilson in which he had tried to encourage colonial powers to transform their territorial control into a ‘trusteeship’ (Judd, 1996, p318). The 'Atlantic Charter' was an attempt clarify and to reiterate the notion that all subject colonies should eventually be made independent (Louis, 1978, p3) Churchill left the meeting claiming to have understood that the clause only applied to the ‘conquered nations of Europe’ whereas Roosevelt intended it to literally mean ‘all peoples’ (Louis, 1978, p123).

The international war

Between January and December 1941 the war would change dramatically in character and scope. On June 20th, German troops attacked their erstwhile allies, the Russians. Hitler had written of his intention to perpetrate this ‘act of betrayal’ in the pages of ‘Mein Kampf’ (Ferguson, 2006, p429). Nazi generals were unconcerned that their attack was so widely anticipated; they thought the Red Army would be ‘easy meat’ for their superbly equipped and battle hardened elite troops (Ferguson, 2006, p430). But the victory did not materialise and the invasion proved a miscalculation. Almost every item of intelligence on which the German plan was based was false. Although slow to mobilise the Red army was large, well trained and well equipped. Their twenty three thousand tanks easily out numbered the German Panzers. While the speed of the Nazi invasion meant early victories, once the huge soviet military machine was in motion the tide began to turn. Germany’s swift attack was turned into a war of attrition that dragged on into a vicious winter for which Hitler’s troops were not equipped (Kaarbo & Ray, 2005, p46).

On December 7th, the Imperial Japanese Navy sprang a surprise two-pronged attack. Firstly on British bases in Malaya and Hong Kong and secondly on the American naval base at Pearl Harbour (Clarke, 2008, p17). Sixteen American warships were sunk or damaged, almost two hundred aircraft were lost and two thousand four hundred personnel were killed. The Japanese battle plan had been kept a close secret, not only from the United States, but also from Germany. Hitler would not have approved the plan; he wanted Japan to maintain a ‘menacing posture’ to keep America busy, not draw it into the fray (Kaarbo & Ray, 2005, p46). On the following day, Britain and America simultaneously declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy retaliated with declarations against America (Havighurst, 1966, p314). Within just a few weeks the conflict had been joined by the Soviet Union, Japan and the United States of America; the war would once again be ‘a world-wide one’, with fighting on ‘every continent and every ocean’. It was a global event and a global tragedy (Morgan, 2000, p49).

Declaration of the United Nations

With America as an official combatant Roosevelt wanted a formalised strategy and command structure with clear post war aims. All interested parties were swiftly informed that a wartime summit conference would convene at the White House on December 22nd 1941 (O'Neill, 1999, p21).

Represented at the meeting were the ‘big four’ America, Great Britain, Russia and China, and an international cadre of allies including the British Dominions and eight governments in exile. The total was twenty-six countries, collectively referred to by Roosevelt as the ‘United Nations’ (Clarke, 2008, p18). The talks lasted throughout the Christmas period and into the New Year, although Churchill managed to slip away to Florida for a few days ‘in the sun’ (Sherwood, 1948, p444).

At the first official discussion Roosevelt dispelled fears that America’s war effort would be directed solely at Japan. American Chiefs of Staff confirmed that Germany was considered the ‘prime enemy’ whose defeat would cause Italy and Japan to collapse (Sherwood, 1948, p444). This intention had been added to the Allied war aims stated in the ‘Atlantic Charter’ and Roosevelt gave his assurance that America intended to pursue policies that would rebuild the post-war world as it was ‘envisioned’ in that charter (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p30). The document was signed by the twenty-six countries that Roosevelt, at that time, considered to be the ‘United Nations’ (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, pp30-31). This was the first in a series of agreements that was to establish the international regulatory institutions most closely ‘associated’ with contemporary globalisation (Goldman, 2007, p20).

Roosevelt and Churchill communicated frequently and appear to have been on friendly terms, despite both having an undeniable ‘blind spot’ when it came to the British Empire (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p31). Roosevelt wanted to see the ‘dismemberment’ of all colonial empires (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p31) while Churchill was determined not to oversee the ‘liquidation’ of Britain’s empire (Havighurst, 1966, p390). However, Churchill was fighting the war of the moment and, with no wish to jeopardise the Anglo-American relationship, he was ‘obliged’ to fall in with the President's plans (Judd, 1996, p318). Germic argues that Roosevelt ‘had the British over a barrel’, he knew that the empire was unlikely to survive without American help but he wanted to see an end to the ‘special trade agreements’ that extended British influence ‘across the globe’ (Germic, 2009, p128). When a copy of the ‘United Nations’ document was examined by the British foreign office, senior figures voiced fears that the agreement might be used by subjects of the Empire as a lever for self government (Louis, 1978, p125). Consequently Churchill disappointed many Indian nationalists when he made it ‘emphatically clear’ to Parliament that the self-determination clause did not apply to India (Vohra, 2001, p163).

Within a month of Churchill's return to London he had to deal with the news that Japanese troops had advanced with remarkable speed through the European 'colonial' states of South East Asia (Vohra, 2001, p163). Japan had overrun and occupied Burma, the Dutch East Indies and Malaya (Blouet, 2001, p112). Worst of all they had successfully seized Britain's 'lynch-pin' naval base in Singapore (Ferguson, 2003, p339) and captured eighty thousand British and colonial troops (Morgan, 2000, p51). This was, Churchill admitted grimly, a 'far-reaching military defeat' (Havighurst, 1966, p315). British morale was temporarily lifted by increased bombing raids against Germany but in retaliation came the 'Baedeker' raids on the tourist cities of Bath, Bristol, Canterbury, Exeter, Norwich, and York (Gilbert, 1947, p16). June 1942 brought Britain another military defeat, this time in the North African desert. A surprise attack planned and led by German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel succeeded in capturing Tobruk, an important British administrative and supply base that guarded the Middle Eastern and Persian oil fields (Morgan, 2000, p50).

The tide starts to turn

In February 1943 came news that a Russian counterattack at Stalingrad had succeeded in retaking the city and that the German forces were beginning to fall back (Havighurst, 1966, p321). Eager to have Hitler's attention diverted, Stalin pressured for a speedy start to the planned Allied invasion of France. Churchill was reluctant as he needed troops to defend British oil supplies and the Suez Canal (Perret, 2007, P365) but in March, he asked his planning staff to formulate a Dunkirk style evacuation in reverse (Kitchen, 1990, p292). Churchill's proposal only utilised those resources he wanted to spare, it was therefore, 'hopelessly flawed', but Roosevelt accepted it. The Americans were not looking for a finished battle plan but sufficient acknowledgment of the operation to justify assembling the 'largest amphibious operation in history' (Perret, 2007, P365). Roosevelt wanted his own planning team to stay in Washington, so the 'relatively unknown' Brigadier General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Allied Commander for operation 'Overlord' (Kitchen, 1990, pp292-293).

In June 1943 the Allies successfully invaded Sicily and the Italian military realised that they could no longer rely on German support. The bombing of Rome confirmed their worst fears; the Fascist Grand Council discharged Mussolini as war leader and ordered his arrest. Fascism in Italy 'evaporated overnight' (Lightbody, 2004, p183).

Germany was by now being subjected to continual aerial bombardment, whole cities were being obliterated by American flying fortresses (Havighurst, 1966, p340). The ‘massed armour, artillery, and air power’ of the Red army was conducting ‘rolling offensives’ that advanced inexorably across Eastern Europe (Carley, 2006, p436). Allied troops were slowly fighting their way up the length of Italy (Carley, 2006, p436). Largely American forces in the Pacific were beginning to reduce the ‘perimeter of Japanese control’ (Havighurst, 1966, p338). The Axis powers were being contained, there was no longer any doubt as to the ‘ultimate outcome of the war’ (Carley, 2006, p434).

On January 14th, 1944 Eisenhower arrived in London with Churchill’s first stage proposal for a 'puny little attack' (Kitchen, 1990, p294). With his unlimited access to troops, transport and equipment, Eisenhower immediately trebled the size of the invading army and expanded the landing zone (Havighurst, 1966, p338). Normandy was the chosen landing zone precisely because it was not ideal, it had no usable harbour and was not conveniently situated. The German high command expected any invasion attempt to use the short Dover-Calais channel crossing. This idea was encouraged by a build-up of ‘dummy tanks, lorries, guns and supply dumps’ in the Dover area (Perret, 2007, p365).

In early June, the English Channel was hit by a spell of particularly bad weather (Havighurst, 1966, p341). After Eisenhower was assured the storm would get no worse he ordered Overlord to commence on the night of June 5th with parachute drops and the next day with beach landings (Kitchen, 1990, p296). American, British, and Canadian troops landed in their thousands (Morgan, 2000, p51). Remarkably, for so vast an operation the Germans were taken by surprise. Of the troops at their disposal only half could be moved at any speed toward Normandy and no tanks were available until the following day (Carley, 2006, p436). As had been arranged with Stalin, troops at the Eastern Front were kept occupied with a synchronous Red army offensive that drove forward with such firepower that the German line was broken and scattered (Carley, 2006, p436). After ten days of ‘unexpectedly dogged German resistance’ (Clarke, 2008, p67) the French coast was considered safe enough for Churchill to visit Montgomery on June 10th and for the king to walk the Normandy beaches on June 16th (Havighurst, 1966, p342).

On June 17th Hitler visited his commanders in France. He assured them that England would soon be destroyed by his new ‘wonder weapons’ and absolutely refused to allowed troops to be removed from Calais to prevent the Allied forces from extending their bridgehead (Kitchen, 1990, p299). Within three weeks the Allied armies were on their way to Paris and the Red army was approaching Warsaw. ‘Nazi Germany was doomed’ (Carley, 2006, p436).

The Bretton Woods agreements

Two weeks after the Allied landings in Normandy, a British delegation boarded the Queen Mary enroute for New York (Moggridge, 1995, p739). They were going to finalise a set of economic arrangements that would shape the world’s financial future. Within three months of the United States entry into the Second World War a US Treasury official, Harry Dexter White, had produced a plan for the ‘post-war economic order’ (Skidelsky, 1997, p336). On the British side of the Atlantic, John Maynard Keynes was working on a similar plan. Keynes was by now considered the ‘greatest economist of the twentieth century’, a fact of which everyone, including Keynes himself was aware (Ferguson, 2003, p353).

He was the know-all who really knew it. In negotiations with the Americans he either dazzled them with his ‘extraordinary eloquence’ or belittled them with ‘extraordinary rudeness’ (Skidelsky, 1997, p337). Outside of the negotiations Keynes referred to the Jewish officials of the US Treasury as the ‘rabbinics’ (Buchan, 2008, p26) and complained of lawyers jabbering in ‘Cherokee’ (Ferguson, 2003, p353). Such remarks may not have been intentionally racist but as one of the directors of the British Eugenics Society Keynes certainly had views on such things (Buchan, 2008, p28).

The two major players presented their proposals, the ‘White plan’ intended to achieve stability through traditional fiscal remedies, harked back to the gold standard (Clarke, 2008, pp30). The ‘Keynes plan’ was full of ‘clever dodges’ and intended to bypass the old gold standard by introducing a new unit of international credit to be called the ‘Bancor’ (Clarke, 2008, pp30-31). The American negotiators were dismissive of the Bancor (Ferguson, 2003, p353) but were wary of Keynes; they did not want to be made to look ‘suckers’ by a British economist however ‘diabolically clever’ he was said to be (Skidelsky, 1997, p337). The British were deeply in debt to the Americans and had little choice but to allow the US treasury to ‘call the tune’ (Skidelsky, 1997, p337).

The ‘White plan’ was inevitably accepted, although Keynes remained a ‘key player’ (Clarke, 2008, p29). The ‘United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference’ took place at a somewhat rambling two hundred and thirty-four-bedroom New Hampshire hotel. The nearby railway halt of ‘Bretton Woods’ gave its name to the proceedings (Buchan, 2008, p26).

The conference was to enable the seven hundred and thirty finance ministers, officials and clerks that represented the forty-four allied countries (Anikin, 1983, p159) to reach a consensus on the details of the ‘Anglo-American Draft Statement of Principles’ (Moggridge, 1995, p728). The delegates slowly approved the many clauses and caveats of the plan and as the weeks passed the initially icy atmosphere between the British and American contingents noticeably thawed (Moggridge, 1995, p743). Keynes continued to press for as liberal an international economic order as possible and White rarely objected (Skidelsky, 1997, p260). Unknown to anyone at that time, White’s financial ideas were often tilted by his extreme leftist sympathies (Clarke, 2008, p30). It later emerged that he had passed all of America’s financial planning details to the Soviets (Buchan, 2008, p27). Not until 1948 was White’s ‘subversive activity’ suspected. He was summoned to explain himself before the Un-American Activities Committee but suffered a fatal heart attack two days before his scheduled appearance (Anikin, 1983, p160).

The collective opinion of the nations represented at Bretton Woods was that the Second World War was ‘made possible’ by the international economic collapse that preceded it (Johnson, 1991, p659). The aim of the conference was to reestablish some form of international economic equilibrium by setting a multi-national seal of approval on a new currency conversion mechanism (Judt, 2005, p107). There were two elements to the plan; a stabilisation fund to provide balanced exchange rates and a reconstruction and development fund that would facilitate the rebuilding of ‘war-torn economies’ and war damaged cities (Legrain, 2003, p105). The stabilisation fund was very similar to Keynes proposal for an international clearing bank based on the bancor except that it would now be based on the US dollar.
Keynes had worked hard on the ‘ultimate synthesis’ of the British and American plans (Moggridge, 1995, p722).

The proposed scheme leaned toward the old British gold standard, except where that had been managed by private financial interests, the Bretton Woods system would be controlled by its own institutions (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p265). It was plain from the start that the new plans would revolve around the US dollar; it was the only currency in the mechanism backed by enough gold to maintain the confidence of convertibility. Using the dollar as a 'world currency' avoided both the rigidity of the gold standard and the insecurity of a floating currency (Legrain, 2003, p105). Ahmad states that the Bretton Woods accords made a 'significant contribution' to economic globalisation because they were based upon the US dollar as a world currency (Ahmad, 2006, p3). Each nation would determine the trading value of its currency against the dollar, which was permanently pegged against gold at thirty-five dollars an ounce (Cundiff, 2007, p29). While international exchange had not entirely escaped the 'long shadow' of the gold standard it did offer world currencies the opportunity to 'realign' their dollar parity without having to devalue (Eichengreen & Flandreau, 1997, p24). While this was more flexible than previous systems, it did in effect, simply replace the 'classical' gold standard with the 'gold dollar standard' (Anikin, 1983, p161). The United States would guarantee the gold dollar standard by making the largest contribution to the stabilisation fund which would offer short-term loans to other contributors should they encounter balance of payments difficulties (Schifferes, 2008; Skidelsky, 1997, p336). This 'modest adjustment facility' was re-named the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Skidelsky, 1997, p336).

The fund for reconstruction and the recovery of monetary stability has since evolved into the 'World Bank' (Buchan, 2008, p26). Milgate and Stimson argue that the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are the 'unprecedented features' which identify contemporary globalisation as being more than the mere continuance of a 'centuries-old trend' (Milgate & Stimson, 2009, pp29-30). The combination of these Bretton Woods institutions was to prove 'potent brew' (Clarke, 2008, p29). Keynes would have preferred that the IMF be based in London and run by 'decent English chaps' but he recognised that aggressive negotiating could jeopardise Britain's continuing need for American financial assistance (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p14). What the IMF did have in London were its critics, those who claimed that the agreements ended any illusion of British 'economic independence' (Cain & Hopkins, 1987, p17).

Internationally the IMF scheme was welcomed as a ‘more global’ solution than anything previously attempted (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p14). Ahmad argues that the inauguration of the Bretton Woods institutions represented the start of the ‘more encompassing’ globalisation of the sort that we understand today (Ahmad, 2006, p3).

The United Nations Organisation

In February 1945, the leaders of the major Allied governments, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, met at the Black Sea coast resort of Yalta. They discussed post-war territorial control and border changes (Johnson, 1991, p101) Churchill attempted to restrict Russian European claims as he knew these would be pushed to the limit by the apparently ‘unstoppable’ Red Army. Roosevelt, however, was inclined to allow many of Stalin’s demands because Russia had agreed to join America in the fight against Japan and because he needed to be coaxed into supporting the United Nations Organisation (Carley, 2006, p437). Roosevelt's scheme had previously been agreed in principle but both other leaders were wary - Churchill because an institution that encouraged the self-determination of ‘colonial peoples’ could adversely affect the British Empire - and the ‘ever-suspicious’ Stalin because he never liked American proposals on principle (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p27). However, as the League of Nations had indisputably failed, a new international arrangement based on a ‘wider global context’ was required (Clark, 1998, p80). The charter of Roosevelt's new foundation took the Covenant of the League of Nations as a start point but care was taken to ensure its independence. The ‘big three’ approved the structure of national representation and that the inaugural meeting of the United Nations Organisation should be held in San Francisco in two months (MacLaurin, 1951, p8).

Franklin Roosevelt did not enjoy good health. He had suffered a fever in 1921 that had left him weak and paralysed. During his presidential career the ‘most elaborate care’ was taken to prevent the public from learning just how debilitated he was. Throughout his hectic wartime schedule of speechmaking, international meetings and conferences both his mental and physical state suffered a steady deterioration. Roosevelt managed to attend the Yalta conference although already exhausted and recently diagnosed with a ‘moderate degree of arteriosclerosis’. When back in the White House he collapsed and was forced to take a complete rest leaving Vice President Truman in office.

Roosevelt never returned. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage on April 12th, 1945 (Flynn, 1948, pp398-412). Truman was now President, an enthusiastic 'anti-communist' whose most frequent reply to any mention of Soviet Russia was that 'they can go to hell' (Carley, 2006, p437).

Two weeks after Roosevelt's death, delegates from fifty nations met in the San Francisco Opera House for the United Nations Conference on International Organisation (Urofsky & Finkelman, 2002, p749). Forty-four of the representatives were from countries that had previously been members of the League of Nations (Myers, 1948, p322). Roosevelt had constructed the event with great political care (Havighurst, 1966, p354). He had witnessed the diplomatic manoeuvring required to create the League of Nations and then the 'tragic failure' of the Senate's refusal to ratify America's membership (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p28). The League had adjourned in 1940 when its activities were 'interrupted' by hostilities (Myers, 1948, p323).

Gerwarth states that those activities included the promotion of 'healthcare, drug control, economic cooperation' and 'labour legislation.' While the League of Nations may have appeared ineffective in preventing conflict it did set the stage for 'European and global cooperation' (Gerwarth, 2007, p2). Roosevelt had started discussing the possibility of the United States taking an 'active role' in establishment of a new 'league' as early as 1942 (Urofsky & Finkelman, 2002, p749). To avoid another Senate rejection, Roosevelt promoted his vision as an American initiative that was integral to the nations 'post-war strategy' (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p27). At a Congressional session in late 1943 both houses accepted Roosevelt's resolution for some form of 'international machinery' to manage and maintain a 'lasting peace' (Urofsky & Finkelman, 2002, p749).

The American Secretary of State opened the San Francisco proceedings with a speech that implied a totally new international concept and never once mentioned that the League had ever existed (Goodrich, 1947, p3). The assembly was then required to approve a new 'distinctly American sounding' United Nations charter (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p13). It had been drawn up by a Harvard professor whose enthusiasm for eighteenth-century English literature had provided the ornate egalitarian tone (Moore & Pubantz, 1999, p24). All were agreed that a General Assembly made up of all member countries would meet annually.

Each national delegation was entitled to one vote on any measure taken by the organisation (MacLaurin, 1951, p9). For swifter action there would be a resident Security Council of eleven member nations. Five would be permanent, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the Russian Federation and another six would be elected for two-year terms (Urofsky & Finkelman, 2002, p749). After the charter was signed it was legally required that the League of Nations terminated its existence (Goodrich, 1947, p3) and on September 20th 1945 there was an official transfer of the League's 'functions, activities and assets' to the United Nations (Myers, 1948, p327). By October 24th 1945 the United Nations charter had been ratified by the majority of its signatories and therefore came into force as a legally acceptable international organisation (UN Publications, 1995, p15). Hobsbawn identifies this event as a pivotal moment in the 'globalisation of the world's political pattern' (Hobsbawn, 1987, p336).

Initially a European institution, the United Nations Organisation has 'progressively became completely global' and although its members are sovereign states the institution encourages the acceptance of a 'supranational' style of decision making (Hardt & Negri, 2001, pp4-5). Singer states that so many developing countries have gained independence and joined the UN that on the 'one-country-one-vote' principle they have a 'controlling majority' in the General Assembly. However, much of the 'supranational' decision-making, requires some input from the IMF or the World Bank whose 'one-dollar-one-vote' system makes the United States as the highest dollar contributor the most powerful member (Singer, 1995, pp348-349).

The Bretton Woods institutions and the many facets of the United Nations Organisation would not only rebuild the international economy but ultimately accelerate the 'globalisation of economic and social relations' (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p8). That such farsighted plans were being made while war still raged across Europe and Asia illustrates the 'remarkable optimism' with which the allied nations determined the shape of the post-war world (Cohen, 2001, p97). These ambitions were strengthened on April 15th 1945 when the Red army captured Vienna; a day later they advanced on Berlin (Carley, 2006, p437). Despite fierce German resistance, the Russians had the city surrounded by April 25th and were closing in (Havighurst, 1966, p355). On April 30th the Soviet army hoisted a red flag over the bomb-ruined Reichstag, Hitler avoided capture by committing suicide.

His death prompted the unconditional surrender of many German military leaders and the rapid collapse of the Nazi infrastructure (Morgan, 2000, p51). Britain celebrated Victory in Europe Day on May 8th, although Japan was yet to face defeat and terrible destruction (Thackeray & Findling, 2002, p158).

The atom bomb

Goldman identifies the process that transformed atomic power into international energy production as one of the key ‘technological manifestations’ of globalisation (Goldman, 2007, pxi). The process began early in the twentieth century when experiments with radioactive material were conducted in France and Germany (Edgerton, 2011, p118). By the interwar period many of the theoretical advances behind the atomic devices that were to force the Japanese surrender were being explored by British university research groups (McKibbin, 1998, p249).

Cambridge University’s Cavendish Laboratory, already a resource of 'international standing’ (McKibbin, 1998, p249) provided an apparatus costing an ‘outrageous’ five hundred pounds which enabled two research physicists, Cockcroft and Walton, to successfully split the atom in 1932 (Johnson, 1991, p406). In the same year, James Chadwick, also at Cavendish, discovered the neutron an atomic particle that was neither positively nor negatively charged (Gosling, 1999, p1; Ball, 2002, p77). Neutral particles proved less liable to deflection and could be made to penetrate and split the nuclei of an atom more easily (Atkins, 2000, p76). It was a discovery of ‘first importance’ (Smellie, 1962, p379) and it provided particular assistance to Enrico Fermi, a physicist working in Fascist Italy (Gowing, 1979, p51; Johnson, 1991, p407). In Berlin in 1938 radio chemists Hahn and Strassmann also split the atom and discovered that the resulting ‘halves’ weighed less than half the weight of the whole. Their conclusion was that the lost mass had been converted into energy in the form of heat. Their colleague Otto Frisch, who had fled Nazi Germany to live in Sweden, verified the findings and named the process after the biological term for cell division – nuclear ‘fission’ (Gosling, 1999, p2). The level of international interest provoked by this success soon persuaded the British government that the details of such progress should be jealously guarded and were thereafter regarded as ‘Secret’ (Gowing, 1979, p51).

After Hitler had seized power in Germany, the trickle of predominantly Jewish scholars leaving the country turned to a steady stream. In Britain, the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) was set up to help refugee academics find suitable employment in universities or scientific institutes (McKibbin, 1998, p254). Rudolf Peierls, who had fled from Berlin, was elected professor of mathematical physics at the University of Birmingham. Otto Frisch later joined Peierls at that institution (McKibbin, 1998, p255). In the late thirties Peierls and Frisch drew up specific plans for an atomic fission 'super-bomb'. Their designs were completed in 1939 and discreetly circulated among the British scientific community as the ‘Frisch-Peierls Memorandum on the practicality of an atomic weapon’ (Atkins, 2000, p227). In just three pages the memorandum described in logical and succinct detail how an atomic bomb could be built and then summarised the ‘horrors’ that would be unleashed during and after detonation (Gowing, 1979, p51). Physicists who studied those fateful pages confirmed that it did indeed show an enriched uranium bomb as both a theoretical and technical possibility (McKibbin, 1998, p255). The British government’s scientific adviser brought the Memorandum to the attention of ministers, who within two months organised a committee of investigation (Atkins, 2000, p227). The first meeting brought a few British politicians together with a large group of well-informed international scientists (Gowing, 1979, p52). The ‘nuclear’ Committee’s first unanimous, and rather whimsical, decision was that they would be known collectively as ‘Maud’, after Maud Ray, a nanny who was looking after the children of one of its members (Atkins, 2000, p228).

At subsequent meetings the project advanced at a miraculous pace; the right people were asked the ‘right questions’ and the answers were intelligently fitted together (Gowing, 1979, p51). British dominions provided many of the physicists, with Canada proving a rich source of both personnel and uranium ore. The British Empire ‘was on the way to becoming the world’s first atomic power’ (Edgerton, 2011, p119). By the middle of 1941 Churchill could see the ‘war-winning’ potential of the atomic bomb. Without consulting the Cabinet or other political advisors he instructed his chiefs of staff to begin developing such a weapon (Edgerton, 2011, pp118-119). Although the work was to be conducted in secret Churchill decided that there would be political advantage in passing Maud reports to the, then still neutral, United States (Gowing, 1979, p52).

America had no official atomic bomb programme but Albert Einstein had advised the setting up of an investigative 'Uranium Committee' in 1939 (Atkins, 2000, p386). This committee was ‘jolted into activity’ by the amazing progress being made by 'Tube Alloys', which was the cover name of the British atomic programme (Johnson, 1991, p408).

The Manhattan Project

Overtures were immediately made for a joint Anglo-American project. The British declined. They were doing very well alone and excused themselves by saying they ‘mistrusted’ America’s ability to keep any such project secret (Gowing, 1979, p52). However the smooth progress was not to last and the British team soon ran into wartime ‘industrial and engineering problems’ (Johnson, 1991, p408). Churchill considered completing the project in Canada, but such a move would add to the already crippling cost. At a meeting with Roosevelt, it was agreed that if the United States would fund the work, Churchill would arrange for Tube Alloys to ‘abandon’ its British base and transfer its material and expertise to America.

The understanding was that the two countries would work 'together on equal terms’ (Nicholas, 1963, pp58-59). The British nuclear programme was duly ‘closed down’ (Gowing, 1979, p52) and a team of its ‘first rank scientists’ was sent to the United States under the leadership of William Penney, a mathematician who had become an authority on nuclear weapons (Sublette, 2007). They went first to Columbia University, in New York City where the logistics of what was now a military operation were being overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who were based at the Manhattan Engineer District headquarters (Gosling, 1999, p13). Thus Tube Alloys was absorbed into the ‘Manhattan Project’ and eventually moved to its central research facility at Los Alamos in New Mexico (Sublette, 2007).

Roosevelt managed to keep the bomb an ultra-secret. Not even Vice President Truman was told (Lavoy, 2003, p26). Similarly, Churchill never spoke of the atomic bomb in War Cabinet meetings; he did confide in a few close associates, but his Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee, was not one of them (Atkins, 2000, p61). Not even comrade in arms Joseph Stalin was informed (Siracusa, 2008, p14). At least not officially. There were Soviet spies at Los Alamos with access to very sensitive material. Klaus Fuchs, of the British contingent sent Russia a copy of all of the data that came his way (Gowing, 1979, p52; Wang, 1999, p203).

‘Compartmentalising’ reduced the usefulness of such material; only a few scientists with the highest possible security clearance were allowed overview of the whole plan (Nicholas, 1963, p60).

Churchill complained to Roosevelt in 1943 that he was not being kept informed; his being aware of the project’s progress was the only way of maintaining the British stake in nuclear research (Atkins, 2000, p61). After some months Roosevelt agreed to forward reports of the ‘joint’ enterprise to London (Nicholas, 1963, p60). The two leaders did keep written records of these ‘agreements’ but the papers never progressed beyond scribbled notes and Atkins suggests they were never intended to do more that ‘soothe’ Churchill’s ‘wounded feelings’ (Atkins, 2000, p61). Britain had resigned from running the world’s ‘largest bomb project’ and would have to accept that its significant contribution to atomic bomb development would henceforth be vastly ‘underplayed’ (Edgerton, 2011, p118). Since Britain’s Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, was not burdened by knowledge of these events, he was able to apply himself to the ‘challenges of the post-war world’ (Dutton, 1997, p63).

The Beveridge Report

Possibly the greatest of these challenges was created by a report that had been published at the height of the war. It had described how the health, education and welfare needs of the British people could be provided through a national insurance scheme. The notion of ‘cradle to the grave’ support for an entire nation was an ambitious undertaking that sprang from the political machinations of one man - Sir William Beveridge (Lang, 2006, p353).

Beveridge was a protégé of Sidney and Beatrice Webb. They had found a publisher for his study of unemployment insurance after recognising it as a potential ‘classic text on unemployment’ (Harris, 1997, p166). Beveridge later spent eighteen years as director of the Webb’s brainchild, the London School of Economics (Beveridge, 1955, p167). Beveridge wrote that many in the world of politics were inclined to underestimate the Webb’s but they wielded a great deal of influence precisely because ‘no one suspected them of power’ (Beveridge, 1955, p251). After the LSE, Beveridge returned to his own academic research as Master of University College, Oxford (Beveridge, 1955, p258). There he took up various unemployment insurance projects and was happy to have found a ‘first-rate’ research assistant in the young economist Harold Wilson (Beveridge, 1955, p260).

When war broke out in September 1939, Beveridge was eager to play his part but difficult to employ. He was a very prominent, sometimes formidable man, who was inclined to be tactless. He was contemptuous of many 'administrative procedures' and often treated government ministers as if they were still his junior lecturers – as many of them once had been (Harris, 1997, p356). Beveridge was eventually invited to investigate manpower requirements from an office in New Scotland Yard. Harold Wilson, it was agreed, should assist and he was drafted from the relative quiet of Oxford to the midst of the London Blitz (Harris, 1997, p358).

Beveridge grumbled a good deal about the insignificance of his task and of the inefficacy of the civil service (Harris, 1997, p362). By the time he delivered his findings in June 1941, his colleagues were 'anxious to get rid of him' (Harris, 1997, p362). Beveridge's 'welcome had run out' and he was diplomatically shifted into the chairmanship of an inquiry into social insurance (Beveridge, 1955, p297). Beveridge felt that he had again been sidelined and determined that regardless of the committee's remit, under his chairmanship it would produce findings on which policy could be based (Beveridge, 1955, p296). He believed that the promise of a universally secure future would be a real contribution to the war effort (Harris, 1997, p374). At the first meeting Beveridge adopted the kind of civil service 'subterfuge' of which Sidney Webb would surely have approved. He refused to prescribe any limits, he would brook no argument and simply 'monopolised' the proceedings (Harris, 1997, p373). The committee quickly recognised that Beveridge intended to use the inquiry as 'vehicle for his own preconceptions' (Barnett, 1987, p26). By the autumn of 1941 it was widely known throughout the corridors of Whitehall that Beveridge's 'tidying up' exercise was getting out of hand. He had adopted a deliberately 'ambitious interpretation' of his terms of reference and he now intended to reform the whole of Britain's social policy (Harris, 1997, p374). There were official attempts to rob the report of authority by reducing the status of the committee (Harris, 1997, p376), but Beveridge worked on and was able to complete a first draft in July 1942 (Beveridge, 1955, p300). It recommended a far-reaching social welfare scheme that was free at point of delivery but paid for by compulsory contributions. Beveridge argued that 'want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness' were the 'five giants' that prevented people from feeling secure. The purpose of a 'policy of social progress', he wrote, must be to address these giants (Beveridge, 1942, p6).

Beveridge judiciously sought the advice of his friend, fellow academic and 'high-ranking' Treasury adviser, John Maynard Keynes while redrafting (Harris, 1997, p399). Beveridge and Keynes conducted their meetings in the 'highly convivial' surroundings of a 'series of West End clubs'; the inclusion of some Keynesian ideas greatly enhanced the chances of Beveridge's scheme being considered viable (Harris, 1997, p400). The two men eventually arrived at a 'deal' whereby Keynes would officially support Beveridge's plan as long as its start up costs could be shown not to exceed one hundred million pounds a year for the first five years (Beveridge, 1955, p309).

As Beveridge neared a final draft in October 1942, most government ministers hoped that the document could be published quietly and then shelved. However others would have preferred it to be quashed entirely (Beveridge, 1955, p316). Beveridge had insured against either outcome by assiduously cultivating expectations of the report in the popular press. Barnett states that Beveridge's 'brilliant Oxford intellect' combined with his high opinion of himself provided an image of such 'authoritarian arrogance' and eccentricity that newspaper editors were always happy to print an interview (Barnett, 1987, pp26-27). By leaking tempting details in 'masterly style', throughout the inquiry process he was able to protect his report from official abandonment (Barnett, 1987, p27). Sir William Beveridge was becoming a national figure, never reluctant to air his views on social policy, and much else, in newspapers, magazines and cinema newsreels or as a panel member on the BBC radio programme, the Brains Trust (Beveridge, 1955, p312).

After several somewhat contrived delays Beveridge's findings were given reluctant approval and publication was fixed for December 1st 1942 (Evans, 1994, p19). At almost the last moment the Minister of Information decided that if the report was to be published anyway they might as well make best use of it. Beveridge's vision of a brighter future had just the mix of 'optimism' and 'patriotism' to boost the flagging morale of a war-weary public (Page, 2002, p166). It was the minister himself who suggested that the report be promoted as 'The Beveridge Plan' as opposed to the work of a 'routine' committee (Harris, 1997, p415). It was an immediate best seller, eventually clocking up sales in excess of six hundred and thirty five thousand copies without taking into account the cheaper edition produced for the armed services (Adelman, 2001, p32).

Churchill was given a copy; he remained extremely sceptical about the success of welfare programmes but was in need of Home Front support (Evans, 1994, p20) and had to concede that there was a popular clamour for the ‘early implementation’ of Beveridge’s scheme (Parrott, 1995, p204).

The publication of the Beveridge Report came just days after news of a long awaited Allied military victory (Parrott, 1995, p207). Beveridge’s optimistic post-war view matched the mood of a jubilant public; military success abroad and the end of poverty at home seemed both synonymous and possible (Harris, 1997, p416). This fortuitous timing illustrated that a national war effort required not only military success but also the intellect of men like Beveridge and Keynes (Barnett, 1987, p26).

The wartime ‘Redbrick’ critic

During the First World War the potential of higher education institutions had been largely wasted with many provincial universities providing only requisitionable buildings (Vernon, 2004, p180). By 1940 the universities had been recognised as a source of recruits for ‘administrative and advisory roles’ as well as more discreet ‘expert services of the state’ (Edgerton, 2011, p230). Despite most universities losing a ‘good proportion’ of their research and development staff (Edgerton, 2011, p230) a concerted effort was made to maintain programmes that could demonstrate a contribution to the war effort (Silver, 2003, p51). Government funding for these institutions was proportionately increased. The University Grants Committee provided on average one third of university running costs in 1939; by 1946 that had risen to two thirds (Scott, 1995, p15). To better manage these financial increases the UGC’s responsibilities were extended to a closer involvement with university planners. The UGC commented on the 'healthy spirit' displayed by many wartime academics who were continuing with vital research as well as maintaining a degree of 'criticism and reflection'. A good deal of both was to be found in the work of ‘Bruce Truscot’ (Silver, 2003, p51).

'Truscot' published two wickedly observant critiques of English higher education as the ‘Redbrick University' in 1943 and ‘Redbrick and these Vital Days’ in 1945 (Dent, 1953, p329). The books were written by Edgar Allison Peers, a professor of Spanish at Liverpool University under the pseudonym ‘Bruce Truscot’.

H. C. Dent, who knew Peers, suggests that the writer was not hiding his identity but creating a fictional character who could ignore the niceties of scholarly behavior and became a ‘lambasting controversialist’ who loudly proclaimed an entirely one sided argument (Dent, 1953, pp330-332). Silver states that Truscot’s ‘outspoken’ views gave the work a ‘popular appeal’ that extended far beyond the world of higher education (Silver, 2003, p57). The first book popularised ‘Redbrick’ as a collective term for the provincial or civic universities, many of which were housed in Victorian buildings of distinctive redbrick (Anderson, 2006, p78; Halsey, 1992, p39). Truscot’s views were dominated by two recurring themes. The first maintained that civic universities had been ‘starved’ of funds by the treasury and of the brightest students by Oxbridge, and were therefore unable to achieve even ‘a tenth’ of their potential (Truscot, 1945, p13). His solution was that the ‘hierarchy of prestige’ that had created Oxbridge should be abolished and the country served by a network of regional universities of equal status (Anderson, 2006, p125). The second theme dealt with the possibility of universities that undertook no teaching but became research institutions devoted ‘exclusively to the pursuit of knowledge’ (Truscot, 1951, p70). This combination of institutional equality and the acceptance of acquiring learning simply for its ‘intrinsic value' (Truscot, 1951, p65) made ‘Redbrick University' the ‘most influential university treatise’ of the forties (Anderson, 2006, p125).

It is likely that much of the success of the book rests on the anonymity of its author and the ‘academic manhunt’ that it prompted (Watson, 2003, pxi). Professor Peers laced the work with fictional biographical detail so as to mislead the enthusiastic ‘amateur detectives’ (Dent, 1953, p327). The real identity of Bruce Truscot remained a closely guarded secret until after the author’s death in 1952 (Silver, 2003, p57). Dent acknowledges that ‘Redbrick University’ will never be considered a literarily classic but it did place higher education under a national spotlight just as the UGC, the universities and the government began thinking about ‘post-war university expansion’ (Dent, 1953, pp328-329).

In this chapter I have looked at early attempts to reform Oxford and Cambridge universities, the successes of University of London and the civic universities, particularly in the areas of research. I have argued that the Great Depression destablised the world economy and helped to drive Italy, Germany and Spain toward fascist leaders who ultimately provoked a Second World War.

Britain initially took the lead in prosecuting the war and only after America had joined the conflict was there time for postwar planning such as the founding of the United Nations Organisation and the Bretton Woods agreements. These insituitions signaled a new American alienment for modern globalisation. Britain’s post war plans included the implementation of social welfare reforms, for example an extensive house building programme and ambitions to increase the number of university graduates.

Chapter 4 1944-1974

This chapter examines how Britain's post war government struggled to launch the welfare state while attempting to maintain the country's industrial status by rapidly expanding the higher education system. Chapter four also explains how, during the 1950's, US financial assistance introduced Europe to many facets of American life. These would later be identified as elements of a process, that by the end of decade, would be for the first time described by the word 'globalisation'.

I will explore how the independence of India in 1947 foreshadowed a British withdrawal from many previously important imperial territories and effectively signaled the end of the empire. This impacted on English higher education by curtailing much of its overseas influence and concentrating attention on the increasingly overcrowded domestic universities. This expansion had also been advocated by two post-war inquiries and had continued as a largely ad hoc process. In 1963 another investigative committee endorsed a more regulated, and more expensive, expansion and recommended that Britain should follow other western countries that were already investing heavily in university education. The government immediately agreed.

This chapter finally deals with a dire international economic crisis that by the early 1970's became so serious as to compel the American government to abandon the Bretton Woods agreements. Without this stable framework, world currencies floated against each other creating a new speculative market. Britain's 1973 entry into the European Economic Community extended the reach of London's financial services and helped set the stage for the later deregulation of the global capital markets. The chapter starts with a look at the impacts of contemporary perceptions of the orgins of the Second World War.

The 'guilty men' and the 1945 election

When the members of the House of Commons had supported the declaration of war in 1939 (Adelman, 2001, p30) many did so, with a mixture of resentment and dread. There was a widely held perception that the terrible sacrifices of the First World War had been 'betrayed' by those with a political or business interest in the continuation of appeasement (Judt, 2005, p62).

This theme was central to the 1940 publication, ‘Guilty Men’; a book which listed the fifteen men considered most responsible for having taken a ‘great empire... to the edge of national annihilation’ (Cato, 1940, p15). The book was written under the collective pseudonym ‘Cato’ by a ‘cross-party’ trio of Fleet Street journalists, Michael Foot, Frank Owen and Peter Howard (Mellini, 2002, p38).

After Victory in Europe Day Britain’s Prime Minister and his deputy were thrown into opposing corners. Churchill wanted to continue governing as head of a coalition until Japan had also surrendered (Havighurst, 1966, p364). On a personal level Attlee was inclined to agree but Labour Party members wanted immediate reforms and were ‘suspicious’ of Conservative delays. Ultimately Attlee backed his members and the political 'truce' was dissolved. Churchill resigned and an election was called for the 5th July (Williamson, 2004, p140). Throughout the war years Britain had witnessed a growth in ‘popular radicalism’ (Dutton, 1997, p63). This was utilised by Attlee and the Labour Party who portrayed themselves as the party who stood for a ‘better post-war Britain’ (Adelman, 2001, p31). The Conservatives complacently viewed themselves as the party of traditional values; they saw little need to explain what they stood for (Havighurst, 1966, p364). The election result was delayed by three weeks to allow for the balloting of Britain’s scattered armed service men. During these weeks Churchill was quietly confident while Attlee ‘remained pessimistic’ (Adelman, 2001, p32).

The Conservative election campaign had inevitably revolved around Winston Churchill as the ‘man who had won the war’. Churchill himself made great play of denouncing his erstwhile Labour colleagues as supporters of a socialist regime that would turn the country into a totalitarian ‘Gestapo-like state’ (Adelman, 2001, p32). It was a miscalculation; the electorate reacted with ‘amused scepticism’ at this attempt to resurrect the ‘moth-eaten’ communist scares of the 1930’s (Havighurst, 1966, p366). Attlee was returned to Downing Street in a landslide win for Labour (McCallum & Readman, 1947, p281). Churchill later wrote with some bitterness of having been 'dismissed by the British electorate’ (Churchill, 1948, p771), it was a defeat from which he would never ‘fully recover’ (Havighurst, 1966, p363). Labour polled almost half the popular vote, some voters wanted social change and some simply blamed the Conservatives for the ‘nation’s ills’ (Evans, 1994, p22). Harold Macmillan later commented that Churchill lost the 1945 election because he had ‘the ghost of Neville Chamberlain' standing beside him (Macmillan, 1969. P32).

The 1945 Labour government

Clement Attlee was able to enter the House of Commons as the first Labour Prime Minister to lead a majority government (Adelman, 2001, p33). McCulloch argues that Attlee was in many ways a strange choice for party leader (McCulloch, 1991, p117). Labour members tended to be distrustful of the overly confident, highly educated style of pre-war political leadership. Many in the wider Labour movement considered those with a public school and Oxbridge background to be 'tainted'; and yet Attlee had both (McCulloch, 1991, p117). After graduating from Oxford, Attlee had trained as a lawyer but instead of taking up that potentially lucrative career had 'opted' for voluntary social work among the poor of London's East End (Lawton, 2004, p50). Whilst working as an assistant to Beatrice Webb he began lecturing at the London School of Economics. By 1912, Attlee had begun thinking of himself as a socialist. McCulloch argues that Attlee's Webb endorsed pedigree coupled with his own 'ostentatious modesty' allowed the Labour movement to forgive him his education (McCulloch, 1991, p117).

The Labour movement was united in the view that the main objective of their government was reconstruction. They were determined to avoid the 'badly managed' return to peace of 1918 (Bruce, 1961, p262). Their 'New Jerusalem' was to be built on two major ideals (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p16). The first being the nationalisation of essential industries, a proven policy that had worked well during two world wars, and the second was a welfare state, which would provide subsidised public health care, housing and education (Simkin, 1997). These principles had considerable support from the public and from prominent establishment figures. The eighty six year old Sidney Webb, now Baron Passfield, stood in the House of Lords and enthusiastically endorsed the Labour government's economic programme (Simkin, 1997). Beatrice Webb had died two years earlier but Sidney was still a respected and influential political figure within the Labour movement and the Fabian Society. He unflaggingly promoted the notion that a centrally planned economy could generate the funds for more efficient public services (Bocock & Taylor, 2003, p225). The sixty two year old John Maynard Keynes had also been elevated to the Lords where, despite extreme ill health, he regularly appeared on the Liberal bench as Baron Keynes. He was on friendly terms with Webb and had always been 'sympathetic' to the Fabian view of a government and an economic system that was overseen by 'experts' operating the 'appropriate levers' (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p16).

Barely three weeks after Attlee replaced Churchill as prime minister the Japanese city of Hiroshima was destroyed by the uranium bomb ‘Little Boy’ (Ball, 2002, p104). Three days later Nagasaki was similarly laid waste by the plutonium device ‘Fat Man’. Over three hundred thousand people died in the immediate blasts and the casuality figures rose in the following months as victims succumbed to horrific burns and radiation sickness (Ball, 2002, p105). On August 15th Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers. The Americans were first to perfect the bomb; both the Japanese and the Russian nuclear programmes had floundered for want of funds. Germany had abandoned atomic research because Hitler was loath to acknowledge that anything involving Einstein’s 'Jewish physics' could be worthwhile (Johnson, 1991, p409).

The British bomb

As Attlee got to grips with his new responsibilities he learned of the ‘prominent part’ played by British scientists in the development of America’s atomic bomb (Blackwell, 1993, p133). Soon after the destruction of Hiroshima, Attlee contacted Truman suggesting that, as they were to jointly control this ‘great force’, they should declare their intention to use it to maintain ‘peace and justice’ (Blackwell, 1993, p133). Truman’s reply was vague and noncommittal. Attlee’s actions were based on his reading of the ‘Quebec Agreement’, which was a typed up version of one the scribbled notes that Roosevelt and Churchill were fond of (Nicholas, 1963, p61). But Attlee persisted and eventually Truman agreed to a meeting (Blackwell, 1993, p133).

After talks at the White House, Attlee was buoyed up by promises of ‘full and effective co-operation’ but the following months provided no evidence of any such support. Stalling US officials explained that the release of nuclear data was subject to the outcome of a congressional hearing (Nicholas, 1963, p64). American politicians were under the impression that they alone had developed and now held the ‘secret’ of atomic bomb building (Gowing, 1979, p53) and they did not want ‘their’ secret shared with Britain’s socialist government (Blackwell, 1993, p133). In 1946 Congress passed a law that placed American atomic research under tight military control, the few American politicians who knew of the ‘great British contribution’ to the development of the bomb said nothing (Gowing, 1979, p53). Attlee had been bypassed.

Although he was able to produce Churchill's copy of the Quebec agreement, American officials doubted its authenticity (Nichols, 1987, p177) and Roosevelt's copy had been 'conveniently lost' (Blackwell, 1993, p133). Any earlier hint of cooperation was now dismissed as a misunderstanding and the US military strictly forbade the dissemination of any information relating to nuclear weapons or power generation (Gowing, 1979, p53).

However 'unjust' Attlee may have thought the situation, it had to be accepted that America had seized what was a 'joint invention' (Blackwell, 1993, p135). He and his angry Cabinet had to face a stark choice (Cawood, 2005, p39). Either they shut down British nuclear research and rely on the protection of the United States, or develop a British bomb whose vast expense would disrupt their plans for post-war recovery. Attlee favoured the second option because possession of the atomic bomb would confer 'first-class status in international relations' (Blackwell, 1993, pp134-135). Some of the elements for a British nuclear programme were already in place, in anticipation of American assistance; the Ministry of Supply had started building research establishments in Lancashire and Berkshire (Blackwell, 1993, p134). Given that some groundwork had been done and that the British nuclear scientists had returned from Los Alamos, the cabinet ordered the restart of Britain's nuclear programme (Cawood, 2005, p39; Atkins, 2000, p61). It was also decided that levels of security and secrecy surrounding the project should be 'especially thick' (Gowing, 1979, p52).

In 1947 American officials found Roosevelt's copy of the Quebec Agreement in an 'irrelevant file' (Nicholas, 1963, p62). The document was secretly examined by a Congress committee who were disturbed to learn that Roosevelt and Churchill each had a veto over the others' use of atomic weapons (Gowing, 1979, p53). It was declared both 'astounding' and 'unthinkable' that Roosevelt should have entered into such a pact (Nicholas, 1963, p66). Gowing argues that, had this agreement been accepted at the time of the Attlee-Truman talks, Britain's claims could 'not have been so blatantly ignored' (Gowing, 1979, p53). Attlee was informed of the veto and since America could not possibly allow it to stand, the British Prime Minister was momentarily in a position to drive a hard bargain. Very reluctantly the Americans allowed Attlee to trade his right of veto for a 'limited' amount of nuclear technology (Gowing, 1979, p53) and the delivery to Britain of some 'un-assembled' atomic bombs for study purposes (Nicholas, 1963, p66).

Welfare and education

Attlee's government had achieved power in the expectation that wide ranging welfare reforms would become reality. The Beveridge Report was at the heart of a reform programme that included implementation of R. A. Butler's 1944 Education Act. He was a Conservative Member of Parliament and wartime President of the UK Board of Education (Martin, 1979, p94). Butler considered the provision of state funded education provision to be woefully inadequate and was determined that it should be improved (Chan et al, 2001, p1). By 1944 he had managed to push a bill through Parliament that was greatly influenced by the 'Norwood Report', a recent inquiry into education (McKibbin, 1998, p224). Butler's legislation called for compulsory secondary education in which pupils could be directed toward schools best 'suited to their abilities' (Chan et al, 2001, p1). This notion assumed that pupils of around eleven years old could be separated into three easily identifiable 'types' (Mackintosh, 1995, p121). Pupils judged to be capable of 'connected reasoning' were selected for grammar schools where the curriculum included enough Latin to permit possible university entry. Pupils who appeared to have some insight into the 'intricacies of mechanism' but not the 'subtleties of language' would attend secondary modern schools and those least comfortable with abstract ideas would be consigned to technical schools (The Norwood Report, 1943, pp2-4; Stapleton, 1999, p255; McKibbin, 1998, p224).

This 'tripartite system' was an important element of Butler's 1944 Act, although he made no suggestion as to how it might work in practice (McKibbin, 1998, p233). This lack of practical detail was of little consequence to the Labour leadership who believed that the Beveridge recommendations would be more instrumental in 'changing society' than would an educational reform (Lawton, 2004, p48). The tripartite system was anyway a contentious issue; the Labour Party membership objected while Attlee's Ministers of Education supported it. Lawton argues that Attlee had a preference for the status quo; he wanted a 'non-controversial education programme' (Lawton, 2004, p49). The tripartite system was intended to provide a 'universal' secondary education with the grammar school as the only state school route to university (Anderson, 2006, p132). Butler's Act intended a 'parity of esteem' between all three types of school but there were so few technical schools that the grammar and modern schools dominated the system (Chan et al, 2001) which, even at this 'binary' level, proved unable to affect a 'parity of esteem' (Quinault, 2001, p15).

The most academically able pupils went to grammar schools and the secondary moderns 'took the rest' (Chan et al, 2001). Although the network of secondary modern schools was improved and extended it never managed to shake off the public perception of being an 'educational settling-tank' (Barnett, 1987, p302).

Attlee's Cabinet decision to leave educational reform to take 'its place in the queue' deprived many local authorities of the funds to maintain schools (Lawton, 2004, p48). A survey of educational facilities within the London County Council area reported that 'not a single building' was of the required legal standard (Havighurst, 1966, p418). The Labour government was assisting the construction industry in house building; schools would have to wait (Kyte, 1951, p145). In 1945, the public purse was all but empty and any allocation of funds had to be balanced against Britain's formidable wartime debt. A total of fourteen and a half billion dollars was owed to the constituents of the Empire with more than half of that owed to India alone (Clarke, 2008, p313). With only 'vague' ideas of how such debt could be reduced (Clarke, 2008, p399) Maynard Keynes was sent to America to secure 'as many dollars' as he could (Clarke, 2008, p315). Keynes raised a loan of three and three quarter billion dollars which was to be paid back at two percent over fifty years (Clarke, 2008, p598). To better facilitate the repayment of this new debt, the 'lease' part of 'lend-lease' was reconsidered and the Americans generously agreed to cancel ninety seven percent of Britain's wartime liability (Clarke, 2008, p315). This was Keynes' last appearance on the international stage; he died the following year (Cornish, 2006, p110).

Attlee had no choice but to accept the Keynes deal (Skidelsky, 1997, p329); it was a massive financial burden but without it nothing could be achieved (Derry & Jarman, 1970, p271). Attlee's Cabinet were determined to fulfil the post-war egalitarian expectations of the electorate. William Beveridge's scheme was attractive because it increased equality without the redistribution of wealth; all members made similar contributions and could expect similar benefits - regardless of differences in income (Page, 2002, p176). These concepts of universality raised many hackles and led the British Employers Federation to declare that the scheme made no sense as a 'corporate strategy' (Barnett, 1987, p239). The Labour cabinet paid little heed; they were creating a 'more equal... society' not a commercial enterprise (Page, 2002, p171).

The Treasury warned that the running costs of the Beveridge Welfare Services would escalate and jeopardise ‘other state expenditure’ (Barnett, 1987, p239). The solution was to fund the creation of the welfare state with the American loan (Barnett, 1987, p241).

Attlee’s cabinet decided that as the loan was intended for the recovery and reconstruction of trade, its purpose would be best fulfilled by producing a workforce whose health and security was secure (Barnett, 1987, p241). The American Treasury did not stipulate how the loan should be used, only that it should not be used for the repayment of the Indian debt. American politicians were determined that their dollars would not be subsidising the ‘wretched Empire’ (Clarke, 2008, p383). This left the British negotiators in the Dominions struggling to reduce the Empire debt (Clarke, 2008, p314). India, as the largest creditor was also the largest problem. The British negotiators had to deal with politicians who were using the debt reduction talks as a manoeuvre to upgrade their relatively small ‘measure of self-government’ to full independence (Clarke, 2008, pxv).

Beginning of the end of Empire

Indications of a political shift in India date from 1857 when a significant number of the population took part in the ‘Great Rebellion’; an uprising still known in Britain as the ‘Indian Mutiny’ (Shridharani, 1942, p221). This revolt followed Britain’s 1840’s declaration of free trade, which included the lifting of import tariffs throughout its overseas territories (Nayyar, 2006, p139). The East India Company, a commercial enterprise that had achieved virtual sovereignty over the subcontinent (Lawson, 1993, p160), ensured that all regions of the country opened their markets to ‘international economic integration’ (Nayyar, 2006, p139). However, this new international trade was almost all ‘export-oriented’ and relied heavily upon cash crops and mineral mining; the ‘benefits of globalisation’ in this case went largely to the East India Company and on a lesser scale to local elites (Nayyar, 2006, p152). In 1857 widespread resentment against such exploitation turned to violence. The Company’s troops managed to contain the conflict but it took six months to quell and almost a year to extinguish completely (Lawson, 1993, p106). The East India Company was revealed to be no longer capable of maintaining order and was dissolved to allow the British Crown to take over the 'formal rule' of India (Lawson, 1993, p160).

Thus, the British Parliament came to govern two thirds of the subcontinent directly and the remaining third indirectly, via a network of princes, rajahs and maharajas (Judd, 2006, L5). The Westminster administrative hierarchy saw decisions made by the Secretary of State in London pass to a Viceroy in Delhi and then finally percolate down to the Indian Civil Service (Brown, 1999, p423). Universal governance was hampered by the variety of India's religions; about seventy per cent of the population were Hindu, while twenty per cent were Muslim with the remaining ten percent a mix of Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, and Jains (Judd, 2006, L5). The Indian National Congress was a largely Hindu-driven movement whose single aim was the 'termination of foreign rule' (Lawrence, 1998, p544). Opposing them in almost every respect was the All India Muslim League, which was broadly supportive of the British administration (Birkey, 2003). This was because they feared that an India, dominated by the Hindu majority, would condemn the Muslim minority to 'perpetual subordination' (Lumby, 1962, p89).

Lumby states that the 'foreign influence' of British traders in overseas territories was often resented by the traditional leadership until they were replaced by a new home-grown elite who had been educated by the 'foreign influence' (Lumby, 1962, p87). This 'new intelligentsia' then sought the rights and freedoms of which they had been taught (Lumby, 1962, p87). Demands for constitutional reform in India became more insistent as Indian professionals became adept at negotiating at a diplomatic level (Brown, 1999, p426). Johnson argues that this 'new elite' monopolised the dialogue with the British and reduced the role of the ordinary Indian population to that of a 'gigantic walk-on crowd' (Johnson, 1991, p470). Successive British governments chose to ignore petitions from India for independence, often citing the view that to lose so valuable an overseas possession would reduce Britain to 'a second-rate power' (Lawrence, 1998, p556).

However, the military and economic muscle that allowed such posturing had 'not survived the war' and by 1946 Britain's grip on India was impossible to maintain (Clarke, 2008, p425). Prominent Indian nationalists further upset the economic balance by demanding the immediate payment of Britain's war debt; fifteen hundred million pounds owed for Indian goods and labour (Clarke, 2008, p402). Attlee's Labour government took a steady, pragmatic and ideological look at the problem.

They had a longstanding commitment to Indian independence; it had appeared in their election manifesto and was also alluded to in the King's speech (Read & Fisher, 1999, p360). Thus Labour was publically committed to the ‘principle of self-determination’ and unlike the Conservatives was prepared to accept the Commonwealth as a ‘substitute for Empire’ (Clarke, 2008, p430).

India’s nationalists were encouraged by the news of Labour’s election (Read & Fisher, 1999, p359) and heartened to hear that a parliamentary team was to travel to India and make an ‘on the spot’ assessment of the situation (Knaplund, 1956, p434). The ten delegates duly arrived and toured the country compiling a report that largely duplicated existing information (Read & Fisher, 1999, p372). When their return to London failed to provide Attlee with a new basis for action, he suggested that a previously rejected attempt to unify the Indian leaders should be revised repeatedly ‘until it became acceptable’ (Read & Fisher, 1999, p372). An offer of four years earlier that had suggested limited dominion status for India was selected for resubmission by Attlee’s new high power ‘three-man Cabinet mission’ (Brown, 1962, p100).

The chief negotiator was to be Sir Stafford Cripps, a nephew of Beatrice Webb, through whom he was already familiar with the Congress leaders. Cripps was a left wing lawyer and as ‘dogmatic a Marxist as only a millionaire can be’ (Ferguson, 2003, p347). The trio arrived in Delhi on March 24th 1946 with the sole purpose of eradicating the difficulties that made the 1942 offer unacceptable (Knaplund, 1956, p434). Cripps and his colleagues had scheduled meetings with India’s three most influential leaders, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Jinnah was president of the Muslim League, this despite his being a nonpractising Muslim with a ‘fondness’ for whiskey, the occasional ham sandwich and at least fifty ‘Craven A’ cigarettes a day, (Tunzelmann, 2008, p91). In 1923 he had politely refused a knighthood, saying that he preferred to remain ‘plain Mister Jinnah’ (Ahmed, 1994, p38). The somewhat aloof ‘Mister Jinnah’ was equally at home in Bombay or London where he might be seen wearing his monocle and an immaculately cut Savile Row suit of which he owned over two hundred (Read & Fisher, 1999, p96). He was named by an American magazine as ‘one of the best dressed men in the British Empire’ (Tunzelmann, 2008, p91).

Jinnah spoke only English (Gandhi, 1986, p123; Panigrahi, 2004, p161)) and yet managed to lead a widely diverse electorate who were bound together only their Islamic religion.

Gandhi was a central figure within the Indian National Congress but would only accept political responsibility when it 'suited his book' (Clarke, 2008, p332). He had returned to India in 1914 after twenty-one years of fighting the 'supremacist' attitude of the British authorities toward Indians in South Africa (Judd, 2009, p38). His most effective campaigns had utilised 'satyagraha', a traditional and culturally acceptable Hindu method of making life difficult for the perpetrator of a 'perceived injustice' by continually obstructing their wishes in a strictly non-violent manner (Ferguson, 2003, p331). Back in his homeland Gandhi met with the leaders of the Indian National Congress and they sanctioned an overtly 'religious appeal' to mobilise the population for a campaign of satyagraha (Brown, 1999, p433). Knowing that large gatherings were only permitted for religious purposes (Johnson, 1991, p472) Gandhi travelled through India on foot and, wearing the loincloth of a 'traditional holy man' (Ferguson, 2003, p331), he spoke at every opportunity, inciting the general population to civil disobedience. The Congress Party officially endorsed Gandhi's policy of 'non-violent resistance' and embraced the new recruits that came with it (Cavendish, 2009, p13). Gandhi was building an image as a charismatic leader; his spiritual attitude and appearance seemed to put him above factional political bickering and caused his followers to hail him as a 'Mahatma, or great soul' (Gandhi, 1986, p132). He also cultivated the valuable support of influential landowners and industrialists and was careful not to condemn the 'wickedness of capitalism' (Knaplund, 1956, p215). Johnson states that, from its beginning, the Gandhi 'phenomenon' exuded a 'strong aroma of twentieth-century humbug' (Johnson, 1991, p471).

While Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru were all London trained lawyers; only the latter found a place in London society. Nehru had the educational background of an English gentleman, a private tutor, followed by Harrow, then Trinity College, Cambridge (Zachariah, 2004, pix). He was an acknowledged intellectual, often seen in the company of Leonard and Virginia Woolf or Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Jawaharlal Nehru was impressed by the passion of political idealism and swallowed the whole 'pharmacopoeia' of European socialism without question (Johnson, 1991, p473).

He returned to India in August 1912, as an idealistic ‘Bloomsbury figure’ who believed that India’s population could solve all of its problems by reading the works of Bertrand Russell (Johnson, 1991, p472). Unsurprisingly he felt out of place (Zachariah, 2004, px). On the advice of friends, Nehru joined the Indian National Congress and ‘drifted into politics’ (Johnson, 1991, p472). He was assigned to assist Gandhi and the initially sceptical Nehru became caught up in the older man’s 'fearless' vision (Brown, 1997, p25). He was won over by Gandhi's unique combination of charm and legal expertise (Zachariah, 2004, p41). Nehru was soon thoroughly ‘converted’ to Gandhi’s brand of nationalism (Lloyd, 1996, p309) and, as the Mahatma’s protégé, was later elected president of the Indian National Congress (Brown, 1997, p26).

In Delhi, Attlee’s ‘Cabinet mission’ faced an immediate setback. Their meetings with Jinnah and Gandhi had been arranged but Nehru was out of the country (Read & Fisher, 1999, p374). In a bizarre piece of bureaucratic cross-purpose planning, the Viceroy had sent Nehru to Malaya to help quell unrest among its Indian labourers (Tunzelmann, 2008, p140). While the British delegation read the Congress leader’s previously prepared notes (Read & Fisher, 1999, p377), Nehru himself was making a huge success of his role as an ‘emissary of calm’ (Tunzelmann, 2008, p140). After completing his mission to Malaya, Nehru moved onto Singapore. On arrival he was immediately detained. Local officials were aware of his socialist leanings and suspicious of his motives. However, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander of South East Asia intervened and insisted that Nehru be treated as a visiting head of state. The whole of Singapore was then ‘thrown open’ to him (Read & Fisher, 1999, p375).

Mountbatten had played an effective role in planning the fight against the Japanese to win back Burma and Singapore, but his appointment as Supreme Allied Commander had been ‘controversial’ (Boatner, 1999, p380). He was very much a ‘royal playboy’, often described as tactless and pushy, and criticised for the ‘shameless’ way in which he exploited his royal connections (Boatner, 1999, p379). Churchill considered Mountbatten’s ‘love of the grand gesture’ and lack of ‘concern for human lives’ to be useful qualities (Tunzelmann, 2008, p115). When America’s General Eisenhower specifically requested that Mountbatten be promoted to Chief of Combined Operations in March 1942, Churchill readily agreed.

Tunzelmann argues that since Eisenhower had never met the Prince it is possible that the General was overly impressed by the fictionalised Mountbatten played by Noel Coward in the feature film 'In which we serve' (Tunzelmann, 2008, pp111-116). However, in Singapore, Nehru, Dickie and Edwina Mountbatten became great friends. Nehru dined at Government House, was driven about in an official car (Read & Fisher, 1999, pp375-376) and feted in the streets as if a visiting film star (Tunzelmann, 2008, p140).

Nehru's absence from India made it even more critical for Cripps and his colleagues to speak with Gandhi (Read & Fisher, 1999, p377). When the old man arrived in Delhi for the talks he insisted on staying among the cities 'untouchable' street sweepers. Amid the ramshackle shanties Gandhi moved into a temple rest house that had been fitted with electric light, fans, telephones and a bathroom (Read & Fisher, 1999, p376). One of the merchant princes who provided funds for such occasions, observed that it cost a 'great deal of money' to keep the Mahatma 'in poverty' (Johnson, 1991, p471). In this event the money was not well spent, the talks made no progress. The main protagonists had no intention of adjusting their demands or even of meeting each other. Jinnah maintained his 'two nation' stance, claiming that Indian Muslims were descended from the Mughals, and as a different race from the Hindu's, should have their own country (Panigrahi, 2004, p152). Nehru's Congress representative pressed for a whole and independent India (Read & Fisher, 1999, p374) and the cantankerous Gandhi claimed to be an unable to offer an opinion as he was 'not even a member' of the Congress Party (Read & Fisher, 1999, p377). Cripps and his colleagues returned to London in despair (Blackwell, 1993, p124). Cripps reported the deadlock to Attlee, the Muslims would continue to demand Bengal and the Punjab as a separate country and the Hindu's would remain 'resolutely opposed' to such a proposition (Knaplund, 1956, p435). Cripps feared that the situation was volatile enough to lead to civil war (Clarke, 2008, p455). He was also concerned that the incumbent Viceroy was preparing his own response to the escalating violence (Clarke, 2008, p466). Code-named 'Operation Madhouse'; the Viceroy's scheme was for a wholesale withdrawal and escape of the British Indian army (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004, p320). Such a retreat would prove a 'political disaster for India, Britain and the Labour party' (Lawrence, 1998, p548). Cripps was determined that the Viceroy must be replaced (Clarke, 2008, p466).

In a personal attempt to break the destructive deadlock, Clement Attlee invited both Jinnah and Nehru to London in early December 1946 (Knaplund, 1956, p435). It failed. After three days neither man would give way (Clarke, 2008, p465). The die was cast, India was on the brink of chaos and Britain had ‘lost control’ (Johnson, 1991, p473). If civil war did break out in India, Britain simply did not have the money or the troops to mount the ‘major military effort’ necessary to contain it (Blackwell, 1993, p124). Attlee’s key ministers were inclined to the view that if Britain’s presence was unenforceable, it was time to get out (Ferguson, 2003, p356). Cripps added that if British rule in India were to be brought to a ‘speedy end’, it would best be carried out under the auspices of a new Viceroy (Clarke, 2008, p464). Before Nehru left London, he and Cripps met ‘covertly’ to discuss the options for the last Viceroy; Nehru was enthusiastic that his Singapore friend Lord Louis Mountbatten should be approached (Clarke, 2008, p466).

The next Cabinet meeting was in agreement that India must accept a set of ‘second-best solutions’ (Clarke, 2008, p478). Cripps then proposed Mountbatten as India’s last Viceroy, describing him as the ‘perfect candidate’ to deliver this potentially unpalatable fait-accompli (Clarke, 2008, p466). Judd argues that Prince Louis was an ‘inspired’ choice, despite a tendency for ‘ruthless self-aggrandisement’ he had a distinguished war record and through his Asian command had acquired a working knowledge of Indian affairs (Judd, 1996, p337). Attlee put the idea to the King, who agreed. Neither of them realising that Nehru not only already knew but also had actually influenced events (Clarke, 2008, p467). Only then, was Mountbatten summoned to Downing Street (Read & Fisher, 1999, p410). Cripps and Attlee explained the situation; Mountbatten was initially very surprised, then very reluctant (Bolitho, 1954, p177). Not only did the task appear practically impossible but would also interrupt his naval career (Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p43). Cripps and Attlee were persuasive and a Viceroyalty did have its attractions. Mountbatten mulled it over for a few days and then returned to Downing Street with a list of conditions (Read & Fisher, 1999, p417).

In later years Mountbatten would recall being given 'carte blanche' in India, but the claim has been dismissed as a characteristic exaggeration (Louis, 1999, p334). Cripps and Attlee were to remain 'firmly in control’ but they did allow the Prince some freedom over details, such as ‘tinkering’ with the timetable (Clarke, 2008, p479).

The time required for Britain to prepare an orderly exit from India was widely understood to be about two years; Mountbatten said that a ‘strict time limit’ must be announced that would allow for no more than fifteen months (Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p43). He was ‘astute enough’ to realise that his chances of success would be greatly increased by an absolute deadline that gave India’s political leaders no time to argue (Read & Fisher, 1999, p418). This suited Cripps and Attlee who had already been informed that Britain would be unable to police India beyond the end of 1948 (Lloyd, 1996, p324). On February 20th 1947, Attlee announced to the House of Commons that Britain would leave India no later than June 1948, and that this would be overseen by Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten as Viceroy (Read & Fisher, 1999, p420).

The last Viceroy and Indian Independence

Mountbatten arrived with his wife and daughter, at the Viceroy’s House, in Delhi on March 22nd 1947 (Menon, 1957, p350). Great Britain and India were poised at the ‘crossroads of history’ (Ghosh, 1985, p39) and he was to preside over the ‘largest upheaval of perhaps any empire in history’ (Engdahl, 2004, p85). Mountbatten was international news and many American politicians viewed his appointment as the last Viceroy with glee. They believed that Britain’s success in international trade was based upon ‘control, constraint, and coercion’ (Black, 2005, p365) and were ‘especially enthusiastic’ about Indian independence (Ghosh, 1985, p30). President Truman continued the ‘unrelenting pressure’ to see an end to Britain’s ‘monopoly possession of the colonies’ (Ghosh, 1985, p32). He shared the view that the sterling bloc and imperial preference impeded ‘free trade and the unfettered movement of money’ (Black, 2005, p364).

Such international considerations not only fell outside of Mountbatten’s remit but also would have seemed peripheral as the Viceroy toured his new three hundred and forty-room home with its seven thousand staff (Read & Fisher, 1999, p425). Dickie and Edwina immediately transformed the dreary mansion with a series of ‘information gathering’ garden, lunch and dinner parties; British India’s last act was to be played out with ‘panache’ (Lawrence, 1998, p551). India’s political leaders were invited to more discreet interviews with Mountbatten. Nehru was made so welcome that he took up lodgings in the Viceroy’s House.

Not only were Nehru and Mountbatten great friends but the Indian leader was also resuming his affair with Edwina (Ferguson, 2003, p357; Judd, 1996, p338). Nehru's relationship with the Viceroy's wife appears to have started in Singapore, but it was in Delhi that it 'ripened into a full-scale love affair' (Read & Fisher, 1999, p446). Judd argues that this 'triangular friendship' may, ultimately, have been beneficial to the process of Indian independence (Judd, 1996, p338).

Jinnah did not share Nehru's easy access to the Viceroy, but he did exploit every available opportunity to state his case. Jinnah was by this time, seventy years old and 'slowly dying', but was not to be underestimated (Bolitho, 1954, p178). After a five day negotiating session an exhausted Mountbatten admitted that he had 'failed utterly' to get Jinnah to reduce his demands for a Muslim homeland (Read & Fisher, 1999, p438). Gandhi's visit to Mountbatten was a lengthy diatribe about it being better for India to make a 'bloodbath' of its religious differences than have the British leave the country divided into 'two armed camps' (Read & Fisher, 1999, p430). Gandhi frequently espoused the dangers of partition in such inflammatory terms (Greenberg, 2004, p11) and while Congress High Command still considered him a useful 'figurehead', his eccentrically subversive ideas were reason enough for the Mahatma to be increasingly 'sidelined' (Read & Fisher, 1999, p430).

Mountbatten quickly tired of such 'acrimonious negotiation' (Bolitho, 1954, p182) and informed London that he would formulate a proposal of his own (Moon, 1962, p65). He discussed the available options with V. P. Menon, the highest ranking Indian in government service and a constitutional adviser of genuine talent (Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p48). The result was a plan in which India and the provinces of Bengal and Punjab would gain self-rule as separate states and then later decide the status of their independence by referendum. Partition would be achieved by democratic vote. Britain would be absolved of any responsibility (Menon, 1957, p354). By the end of April, Nehru and Jinnah had provisionally accepted 'partition by self-determination' (Read & Fisher, 1999, p441). Jinnah complained that the regions set aside for a Muslim state had been reduced but was gratified to know that however 'moth-eaten' (Gandhi, 1986, p160) Pakistan 'was in the bag' (Read & Fisher, 1999, p434).

Encouraged by this success, Mountbatten ill advisedly extended the partition plan to its 'logical' conclusion (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004, p322).

He instructed Menon to draw up a new multiple partition plan that would grant independent self rule to each of India's twenty-one provinces and five hundred and sixty five princely states (Tunzelmann, 2008, p191). Menon warned Mountbatten that if the plan were changed, the Indian leaders would withdraw their approval (Menon, 1957, p358). Although the Viceroy tried to ignore this warning (Read & Fisher, 1999, p444) he later resolved to break with 'protocol' and show Nehru the new draft (Tunzelmann, 2008, p190). As Menon had predicted, Nehru rejected the plan 'outright' (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004, p322). Nehru ranted that the draft was quite different to the one he and Jinnah had accepted (Tunzelmann, 2008, p190) and that he would never agree to India being broken into hundreds of small and 'potentially antagonistic' independent sovereign states (Tunzelmann, 2008, p191).

Mountbatten was to have made the plan public in just three days, and narrowly avoided disaster and humiliation (Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p48). Now 'severely rattled', he turned again to Menon (Read & Fisher, 1999, p447). The constitutional advisor calmly explained that as the new plan had not been offered for approval they could simply revert to a modified partition plan (Read & Fisher, 1999, p448). The referendum element, Menon suggested, should be removed (Read & Fisher, 1999, p448). Mountbatten was now decisive; he took Menon for an immediate meeting with Nehru, who despite everything was still a 'guest' at the Viceroy House (Bolitho, 1954, p184). After several telephone calls to Congress officials Nehru was able to confirm that the revamped plan was acceptable (Tunzelmann, 2008, p192).

Mountbatten knew that the British ministers wanted to get India off their hands as quickly as decently possible (Read & Fisher, 1999, p451) and so set a meeting with the Indian leaders for June 2nd (Menon, 1957, p365). As the men who would separate Britain from India gathered around a table in the Viceroy's study (Tunzelmann, 2008, p197). Mountbatten launched straight into a well-rehearsed briefing. He finished by saying that the plan was not expected to meet complete approval but that in the interests of their country he advised them 'simply to accept' (Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p48). Only Jinnah looked doubtful. As the meeting broke up Mountbatten held him back and repeated dramatically that whole basis of the agreement was that all parties accept it simultaneously; any delay and the fragile union would flounder (Tunzelmann, 2008, p198). There was no choice, the Muslim League must agree (Read & Fisher, 1999, p455).

The future leaders of India and Pakistan assembled in the Viceroy's study next morning. Mountbatten brought the meeting to order and was gratified to learn that the plan was to be 'unanimously endorsed' (Bolitho, 1954, p187). It was the 'first time in history' that a scheme for an independent India had not raised any objections (Tunzelmann, 2008, p199). India's thousand mile wide 'wedge' shaped landmass was to have its two most northerly corners partitioned. East and West Pakistan would be separated by hundreds of miles but joined by the Islamic faith and a 'fierce wish' to be free of Hindu 'domination' (Bolitho, 1954, p187).

The first task for the subcontinent's new leaders would be to grapple with the logistics of splitting the administrative assets of a single territory between the two new sovereign states. To this end Mountbatten produced a slim document entitled 'The Administrative Consequences of Partition'. Drawn up by his staff it was a thirty four-page 'masterpiece of compression' intended to provide a method of dividing the administrative facilities between the two new countries (Read & Fisher, 1999, pp457-458). Everything had to be 'shared out' from aircraft, ships and fuel to hospital equipment, drugs, even 'desks and typewriters' (Bolitho, 1954, pp188-189). The new boundaries would mean 'tens of millions' of people being uprooted and moving home rather than remaining where they had been made a religious minority (Lloyd, 1996, p325).

As the men around the table began to realise the enormity of the task, Mountbatten dropped his bombshell. It would all have to be achieved in ten weeks. He had advanced the official date for the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 15th 1947. Everyone was frozen with 'shock' (Tunzelmann, 2008, p199). Ferguson states that it was the Labour cabinet's enthusiasm to 'get shot of India' that allowed Mountbatten, who had a 'lifelong fondness' for accelerating agreed arrangements, to speed up the transfer process (Ferguson, 2003, p356). London had approved this earlier withdrawal date despite knowing that 'no one was ready' (Greenberg, 2004, p7). The Indian leaders were so 'obsessed with the dangers of delay' that they did not require to be 'bludgeoned' into accepting the earlier date (Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p46). So circumstances were set in train for a collapse into 'chaos' (Ferguson, 2003, p356).

Later that day Mountbatten and three of the 'bewildered' leaders made a 'distinctly un-triumphant' broadcast on All-India Radio (Tunzelmann, 2008, p199).

The Viceroy explained that the boundaries between the new countries would be announced in due course (Read & Fisher, 1999, p458). Within 'an hour' of this announcement people began packing their possessions for a move to the east or to the west. There were multitudes on the move; all forms of transport became jammed with 'frenzied' refugees, most of whom were armed (Bolitho, 1954, p189). Mountbatten's 'hurried arrangements' precluded any chance of a safe, well-organised transfer of power (Lloyd, 1996, p325). Brown argues that the blame must be shared; the 'short-sightedness' of Congress, the League's 'intransigence' and Mountbatten's undue haste all combined into a lethal combination that 'set the stage' for brutality and carnage (Brown, 1962, p103). Millions of Hindu's living in what would become Pakistan 'fled toward India' and in the opposite direction Muslims, fearing persecution in India, packed up and headed for the 'emerging state of Pakistan' (Greenberg, 2004, p8). Bolitho argues that the creation of two new countries without credible law enforcement whose populations were 'intent on killing each other' made bloodshed unavoidable (Bolitho, 1954, p177). The number of deaths is impossible to calculate but estimates indicate a total of between two and five hundred thousand (Brown, 1962, p102; Campbell-Johnson, 2002, p44; Lawrence, 1998, p554)

Throughout the ten-week period the Indian Civil Service, although also 'torn by internal strife' struggled to apportion administrative and public service facilities (Bolitho, 1954, p177). Remarkably on August 14th, British radio listeners were able to tune in at seven thirty that evening and hear a midnight broadcast from Delhi by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (Havighurst, 1966, p394). His words were 'carefully selected'; jubilation in the face of continuing riots would be both irresponsible and inappropriate. He spoke optimistically but somberly of a 'tryst with destiny' and of freedom gained (Zachariah, 2004, p138). By the end of Nehru's speech India did indeed have freedom - 'of a kind' (Zachariah, 2004, p139).

The creation of a formally independent government progressed relatively well, only three of over five hundred princely states failed to immediately join one of the new dominions (Havighurst, 1966, p394). Prime Minister Nehru conceded that India would be difficult to govern and attempted to maintain some continuity by inviting Mountbatten to become India's first Governor-General (Havighurst, 1966, p394).

Since very few were aware of Jinnah's failing health it had been widely assumed that he would become Pakistan's first Prime Minister, but he chose to delegate the role to the 'younger and stronger Liaquat Ali Khan' (Bolitho, 1954, p191). Jinnah did however, agree to be Pakistan's first Governor-General (Havighurst, 1966, p394). Mountbatten had always seen himself being presented with the duel title of Governor-General of India and Pakistan and fumed that he was to be denied a 'second crown' by that 'bastard' Jinnah (Ahmed, 1994, p40). Judd states that Mountbatten's 'transformation' from autocratic Viceroy, to influential but relatively powerless Governor-General 'neatly illustrated' the changing status of the British Empire (Judd, 1996, p323). The imperialists who had created the 'international commodity markets' that were the 'roots' of modern globalisation (Guttal, 2007, p525) had been undone by the 'deadweight' debts of war (Clarke, 2008, p314).

Although the end of Britain's Indian Raj had been 'swift and involuntary' it was constitutionally acceptable and Attlee's claim that it represented the 'triumphant completion of a long-matured plan' was allowed to stand as a 'pleasing if transparent fiction' (Darwin, 2009, p539). From almost his first day in office the 'charismatic' Nehru began playing the international field (Berger, 2004, p70). He flaunted socialist principles for Russian consumption, although his knowledge of the country was entirely based the Webbs' blinkered reports (Johnson, 1991, p475) and simultaneously hinted that India might 'hitch its wagon to America's more resplendent star' (Ghosh, 1985, p42). The leaders of both India and Pakistan exercised their new national status by enthusiastically joining international organisations and were among the first to recognise the General Agreement of Tariff and Trade (GATT) (Nayak et al, 2004, p1).

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

On October 30th 1947, the representatives of fifty-three countries assembled in Havana, Cuba, to finalise the details of the International Trade Organisation (ITO) (Srinivasan, 1998, p10). Roosevelt had been an ardent supporter of free trade and before his death had proposed the founding of a permanent international institution to broker continuing tariff reduction. The ITO was proposed as a 'politically neutral' organisation that would nurture a new global market by easing the processes of importing and exporting manufactured goods (Seavoy, 2003, p214).

The foundation was intended to join the IMF and the World Bank as a trio of ‘global governance institutions’, which, together, would integrate the international economy (Douglas, 1997, p6). The ‘framework’ of the Atlantic Charter was used as a basis for the new regulatory accord (Howe, 1997, p305).

During the previous year Truman had proceeded with Roosevelt’s plan for a preliminary trade conference in Geneva. Twenty-three of the attending countries had agreed to reduce import tariffs (Beresford, 2000, p82) but could not reach agreement on the ITO charter (Hoekman & Kostecki, 1995, p17). The Havana Conference endorsed the Geneva tariff reductions but the ITO sticking points were so numerous that it threatened the whole project (Srinivasan, 1998, p10). The Truman administration feared that the accord so far achieved ‘might unravel’ if left without some binding confirmation (Srinivasan, 1998, p11). They proposed that tariff reductions agreed in Geneva should be given ‘temporary’ legal status (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p14). This ‘stopgap’ measure was named the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (Legrain, 2003, p107).

With dreams of an International Trade Organisation temporarily abandoned GATT was considered a reasonable ‘interim’ alternative. Though lacking an ‘institutional structure’ it was an internationally accepted trade agreement and would serve as a basis for governmental cooperation for the next forty-seven years (Hoekman & Kostecki, 1995, p13). GATT facilitated a worldwide exchange of tariff reductions during a period of 'breathtaking economic integration’ (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2000, p14). GATT slowly developed its own trading, negotiation and dispute settlement practices until it emerged in the 1990’s as a ‘well-oiled’ machine with a viable organisational structure (Hoekman & Kostecki, 1995, p13). By this time GATT could no longer continue as simply a ‘multilateral trade agreement’, it had evolved an infrastructure of trappings and responsibilities (Agarwal, 2005, p15) that had to be anchored in international law. At the 1994 International Trade Conference in Marrakesh, GATT was officially transformed into the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Hoekman & Kostecki, 1995, p14). Almost immediately the WTO began to pursue the international and ‘regional free-trade and investment agreements’ that would place it with the World Bank and the IMF as the creators of the ‘economic and financial architecture for gobalisation’ (Guttal, 2007, pp524-526).

Roosevelt's vision of an organisation to formalise the reduction of international import duties took almost fifty years to achieve because it had to wait for the 'expanding world economy' to reach an actionable level (Aldous, 1997, p34). Truman pursued Roosevelt's free trade initiatives because a strong, solvent Europe was seen as 'good for America' not only in trade terms but also as a bulwark against Soviet expansion (Mann, 2008, p16). The Truman administration determined that peace and `collective security' was achievable through 'self-determination, liberal democracy and free trade' and set about creating a world in which such qualities could flourish (Aldous, 1997, p34). In the two decades following world war two international trade witnessed a 'phenomenal economic growth', which did indeed promote 'political stability and increasing social equality' (Mann, 2008, p18). This post-war economic recovery was enabled by the American government's abandonment of isolationism, its adopted role as the global 'caretaker of democracy' and its financial assistance (Aldous, 1997, p34).

The Marshall Plan

In 1947, the 'entire fabric' of the European economy was in tatters (Mills, 2007, p35). Many cities were disfigured by physical destruction that could not be repaired because of a severe shortage of raw materials, fuel and food. Germans and Austrians were literally starving in the streets and the British continued wartime rationing (Thompson, 2003, p317). European governments were forced to import essential supplies with money that should have been invested in the reconstruction of their economies and infrastructure (Mills, 2007, p36).
The problem was beyond the scope of the newly formed IMF and the World Bank and yet the 'vicious circle' could not be broken without economic assistance (Mills, 2007, p36).

General George C. Marshall, President Truman's Secretary of State, examined possible solutions and with his economic advisors began to formulate what he called the 'European Recovery Program' (Keene, 1998, p155). On June 5th 1947, Marshall used a Harvard university award ceremony to deliver a carefully crafted ten minute speech containing the 'suggestion' that America could afford to 'jump-start' Europe's post-war recovery (Ellwood, 1998, p33). However the offer was not made purely 'out of altruism' (Hutton, 1995, p278). America was concerned about Soviet influence in Europe.

France and Italy had well-established communist parties and the Russians were undoubtedly encouraging unrest in Greece, Turkey and Iran (Aldous, 1997, p34). A Europe left in financial ruin could so easily become the 'fertile ground' (Thompson, 2003, p317) so avidly sought by Stalin to extend his ideological empire (Hutton, 1995, p278). In the final analysis it was the potential spread of communism that convinced the most 'resistant' members of Congress that they should assist in Europe's economic recovery (Thompson, 2003, p319). A communiqué officially offering American financial aid for a period of four years was sent to each of the European governments (Mills, 2007, p39). The suggested procedure was for each nation to calculate their own requirements, then for all of the nations involved to apply for one joint grant (Thompson, 2003, p319). Just twenty-two days after Marshall had first mooted the European Recovery Program at Harvard, a meeting was called in Paris for European leaders to discuss this potential 'lifeline' (Thompson, 2003, p319).

In September 1947 Truman made a formal request to Congress and the US treasury to authorise a total grant of seventeen billion dollars to be paid over four years to the sixteen European countries (Thompson, 2003, p320). This non-repayable grant enabled the nations of Europe to concentrate on reconstruction while importing much needed materials and food from America. American exporters were provided with a market for goods of which they had a massive surplus (Johnson, 1991, p440), American politicians were provided with the hope that a Europe united in free trade would provide a bulwark against communism (Hutton, 1995, p278). The Marshall Plan made 'excellent sense' for Western Europe and the United States (Johnson, 1991, p440).

America's European 'anti-Communist crusade' was not an unsophisticated barrage, it was a subtle appeal aimed directly at the people whose lives were being improved by Marshall aid (Ellwood, 1998, p38). Though America was ostensibly funding economic recovery it also expected 'cultural change' but was prepared to allow the time for a slow transformation (Berghahn, 2007 p2). This process was designed to imbue European 'hearts and minds' with an 'Americanised vision' of the future (Ellwood, 1998, p33). Europe was officially provided with American food, appliances, radio programmes, books and films (Ellwood, 1998, p35), less official provision included popular music, organised crime, 'fast food and slang' (Dean, 1997, p15).

Nor were the children forgotten; ‘Operation Bambi' was endorsed by the relevant national education ministries to provide young Europeans with American flavoured cartoons, comics and puppet shows (Ellwood, 1998, p36).

By 1950 the Marshall Plan was being declared an ‘overwhelming success’ (Johnson, 1991, p440). Not only had it succeeded in curbing communist expansion but also as an economic ‘stabilising mechanism’ it had given capitalism a ‘human face’ (Mann, 2008, p17). When the scheme had run its course the nations who had received Marshall aid showed an average increase on pre-war production figures of forty percent in industry and eleven percent in agriculture (Aldous, 1997, p36; Thompson, 2003, p322). The plan had also succeeded in creating a ‘revolution of rising expectations' among the general populace (Ellwood, 1998, p40) but those Washington politicians who had hoped to see all the European governments together in an American style congress were disappointed. Most of the European governments had taken subtle but evasive steps to prevent such an administrative shift. The British government had been careful to ‘show enough enthusiasm’ to be included in the Marshall Plan but ‘enough detachment’ to avoid any lingering entanglement (Glynn & Booth, 1996, p236). The French had avoided integrated trade by using most of the Marshall aid to ‘finance their colonial wars’ (Mann, 2008, p18). Indeed many in Congress were coming to the conclusion that they had been ‘led up the garden path' by France and by Germany and Italy, their very large dollar investment was not likely to return much in the way of ‘visible social or political dividends’ (Ellwood, 1998, p39). Though many European industries and businesses benefited from technical modernisation it was their governments who resisted. Almost none of the American ‘modernising methods’ proposed for national administrations and economies was ‘ever adopted’ (Ellwood, 1998, p40).

It was American ‘cultural hegemony’ that really made a global impact. The ‘Operation Bambi’ generation grew up with a broader understanding of, and acceptance for the American lifestyle than did their elders. In Britain many transatlantic ideas were filtered into a ‘youthful and anti-authoritarian... cultural revolution’ (Ellwood, 2002, p20). The impact of American films and music led to English becoming the ‘dominant foreign language’ taught in European ‘education systems’ (Phillipson, 2001, p191) and has given rise to the most ‘visible cultural expressions of globalisation’ being identified with Americanisation (Giddens, 2002, p15).

Marshall Aid enabled the Labour Government to deal with an acute housing shortage by announcing that local authorities would be subsidised to build three hundred thousand new houses a year (Pollard, 1962, p403). The requirement of foreign funding for a domestic building programme should have 'erased any lingering hope' of Britain regaining its position as a global power (Darwin, 2009, p537) but with American money Britain could continue to 'play the banker' to the 'invisible empire' of the sterling bloc (Barnett, 2011, pp2-3). Darwin states that this 'mirage of continuities' diverted both social and financial resources from the recovery process (Darwin, 2002, p59). The expense of maintaining this apparent 'world role' when added to that of launching the welfare state and importing building material for the 'council-house' project impeded other 'much-needed modernisation' (Barnett, 2011, pp2-3). Barnett argues that this 'parlours before plant' policy diverted funds from the reconstruction of industry and the expansion of technical and higher education (Barnett, 1987, p246).

Two higher education inquiries

The provision of 'adequate facilities for further education' was made the responsibility of local authorities by R. A. Butler's 1944 Education Act (Butler, 1944, p33). Even as the Act was being drafted, Butler was aware that there was no authoritative body to oversee and coordinate such facilities on a national scale. It was a concern that he raised when reading the Bill to the Commons and as a result a committee under Eustace Percy was set up to examine the issue (Silver, 2003, p145). In early 1946 the Cabinet launched another inquiry into virtually the same area under Alan Barlow. Both were to investigate the prospects for higher education with special attention being paid to technology and science (Evans, 2009, p2).

Both committee's concluded that the post-war demand for trained scientists and technicians would dramatically outstrip the available supply (Walklaad, 1964, p389). The Percy Committee revealed that the 'output' of British graduate engineers averaged just seven hundred per year; their recommendation for increasing this number was a network of upgraded technical colleges offering full-time technology courses to university level (Divall, 1990, p99). The Barlow committee offered similar advice but favoured the expansion of technology courses in existing universities (Silver, 2003, p145).

Barlow indentified Britain's ‘inferiority in professional training’ (Barnett, 1987, p293) and bluntly declared that the number of graduating engineers and scientists must be doubled ‘as soon as possible’ (Zuckerman, 1958, p241). It was understood that this would entail an eighty percent increase in university places (Halsey, 1958, p68) and a corresponding increase in government funding (McKibbin, 1998, p259).

The Barlow committee recommended that as the University Grants Committee continued to supervise State aid to higher education via its ‘elaborate conduit’ of grants and allowances (Armytage, 1954, p306), and would be responsible for vastly increased amounts of public money, its traditionally ‘passive’ role should be replaced by a more robust managerial style which would allow intervention into university policy (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p473). The UGC membership recognised that they would be subject to a ‘greater measure’ of government ‘guidance’ (Owen, 1980, p264) and declared that they would always observe the ‘principle of academic autonomy’ (Bond et al, 1955, p10) as well as their own traditional ‘tactful and measured manner’ (Owen, 1980, p264).

Attlee’s acceptance of the Barlow recommendations served a duel purpose. Firstly the dramatic increase in university places would produce the ‘professionally-trained’ scientists and engineers that were essential to postwar reconstruction (Zuckerman, 1958, p241). Secondly the extra places would soon be needed by Butler’s free grammar school pupils who would qualify for university entry (Halsey, 1958, p69). A university place was theoretically free of charge since the state was pledged to pay the fees for all successful applicants (Havighurst, 1966, p419). But about thirty percent of England’s universities had opted for the residential model of higher education; so if living expenses were not covered by the means tested maintenance allowance it could still prove expensive (McKibbin, 1998, p259).

McKibbin argues that this is one of the main reasons why a university education continued to remain ‘socially exclusive’ (McKibbin, 1998, p259). Once the Labour government had fully endorsed the Barlow findings and rallied the collective forces of the universities and the UGC, the task of doubling graduate output was achieved in ‘only four years’ — and this, claims Zuckerman, without any perceptible lowering of academic standards (Zuckerman, 1958, p241).

The UGC were confident at the outset that this objective could be achieved by expanding ‘existing universities’ (Bond et al, 1955, p12), and without asking students to resort to ‘shift working’ (Silver, 2003, p145).

The civic universities, by now widely known as 'Redbrick’s', bore the brunt of the expansion with most doubling both student intake and their physical size (McKibbin, 1998, p259). Two colleges were made full universities and one new university was founded (Barnett, 1987, p293). Only Oxford and Cambridge Universities took no part in the initial expansion (Havighurst, 1966, p419); both cited ‘physical and educational constraints’ as obstructions to their involvement (McKibbin, 1998, p258). Thus the ‘baneful domination’ of Oxbridge over the redbrick universities was perpetuated (Bocock & Taylor, 2003, p235). The cost of expanding higher education provision presented the Labour government with yet another of the many ‘economic headaches’ that were threatening their administration (Carter, 1997, p554).

Attlee in difficulty

When Keynes negotiated the Washington loan it had been intended to cover the ‘financial gap’ in Britain’s balance of payments for at least three years. Keynes did not live to discover that he had misjudged the recuperative quality of the dollar, which rapidly gained strength at the expense of other world currencies (Clarke, 2008, p471). However, British demand for American products like Virginia tobacco and Hollywood films was unabated, they were considered acceptable as ‘petty luxuries in a bleak world’ (Clarke, 2008, p472). By 1948, the purchase of goods imported from ‘dollar areas’ had trebled and pushed the balance of payments deficit to six hundred and thirty million pounds (Havighurst, 1966, p405). The government tightened the economy by controlling imports, fixing prices and getting trades union and management agreement on freezing profits and wage rises (Clarke, 2008, p472). Just as things looked to be as bad as they could get, a ‘mild recession’ hit the American economy and the extremely fragile British export market crumbled (Pollard, 1962, p361). The balance of payments deficit became unbridgeable; the British economy had descended into ‘shambles’ (Studlar, 1996, p25).

The dollar continued gaining ground and the prospect of Europe sliding into deficit loomed. Instead of adjusting the dollar the Americans hoped that Attlee’s government could be ‘cajoled’ into devaluing the pound and that Europe would follow suit (Glynn & Booth, 1996, p221).

Taking optimum advantage of Britain's financial crisis, the US Treasury 'pressed strongly for devaluation' (Glynn & Booth, 1996, p221). Since it was American aid that was keeping the British economy from bankruptcy there was little choice but to comply (Havighurst, 1966, p407). On September 18th Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the value of the pound was to be reduced against its dollar equivalent by almost one third (Pollard, 1962, p361). As the Americans had hoped, most of the 'non-dollar countries' also devalued though none cut quite so deeply as did the British (Glynn & Booth, 1996, p222). Pollard states that the Labour government's ruthless response was intended to signal their 'determination' to control the economy (Pollard, 1962, p362). But there was no disguising this resounding 'defeat' for Labour's financial policies (Judd, 1996, p341) and it left the Party with only five months before the upcoming general election to repair the damage (Havighurst, 1966, p407).

The election was called for February 1950. All of its political contenders professed agreement that Britain's current problems were simply 'short-term weaknesses' of the sort that might be expected after so many 'wartime sacrifices' (Barnett, 1987, p304). Such claims were at the time difficult to refute. The joint Commonwealth economy and the sterling trade bloc served to 'camouflage' Britain's decline as an 'economic and political' world power (Judd, 1996, p342). Barnett argues that the politicians were themselves 'deluded' by wartime victory and honestly believed Britain to be a 'first-class power' that could be favourably compared with that of America (Barnett, 2011, p1). The election campaign produced few changes in the positions of the main parties but improved radio and television technologies, allowed far greater domestic and international scrutiny of the process (Nicholas & Butler, 1951, p265). Television news cameras captured both large political events and smaller personal moments such as Clement Attlee and his wife setting off alone on a thirteen hundred mile campaign of speaking engagements in their pre-war family car (Havighurst, 1966, p427).

The Labour Party ultimately polled forty six percent of the popular vote; only one percent less than their landslide win of 1945 (Pearce, 2008, p64). But due to the vagaries of the British electoral system this translated into a seventy-eight seat loss (Havighurst, 1966, p427). Neither Labour, nor any other political group could claim enough support for effective government and the result was considered a 'stalemate' (Havighurst, 1966, p428). Eighteen months later Attlee tried again.

This time the Labour Party polled more votes than any other single party in British political history; but the extra votes went to safe-seat candidates and the election was lost (Pearce, 2008, p23). Churchill and the Conservatives, supported by the Liberals were returned to power with a sixteen seat majority (Pearce, 2008, p22). Back in familiar territory, Churchill picked up the reins in flamboyant but authoritative style. He declared himself ‘astonished' to find that Britain was in possession of its own atomic bomb (Vincent, 1998, p197) and refused a request for an inquiry into higher education claiming that there was ‘no reason to be dissatisfied’ with the universities (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p475).

The fifties: higher education goes to market

University authorities however, were deeply dissatisfied. The expansion of British higher education had been a political success in fulfilling the national need for more graduates (Halsey, 1992, p64). But it had also created an ongoing demand for university places that could barely be met. Projections from the period indicate that full time student numbers were set to double every nine years as opposed to a prewar figure of every twenty-four years (Pratt, 1992, p32). By 1952, student numbers were straining the system to such an extent that universities became unwilling to discuss further expansion (Richardson, 2002, p13). The University Grants Committee was also reticent, claiming that ever-increasing student numbers would make it impossible to maintain standards (Ross, 2003, p32).

In 1953, while the universities struggled to accommodate increasing numbers of students and preserve teaching quality (Lowe, 2002, p82) the government expressed its satisfaction with the state of higher education (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p475). Then in 1956 the launch of the Russian satellite 'Sputnik' caused questions to be asked about the international standing of British technology. Because most universities were already at full capacity government ministers began considering alternative 'élite technological institutions' (Scott, 1995, p16). Within the year a hundred million pounds had been allocated for what would become a network of advanced technology colleges (Barnett, 1987, p292). These institutions were a government higher education initiative; they remained under ministry management and were deliberately kept outside of the university sector and away from UGC control (Pratt, 1992, p32).

These measures greatly excited the ‘radical expansionists’ who advocated wider participation in university higher education and now began gleefully predicting a future when there might be as many as ten percent of the relevant age group studying at a university at any one time (Halsey, 1992, p64). By 1957 total numbers of students were indeed approaching this figure and after further expansion, upgrading and the granting of new charters, Britain had unprecedented numbers of students attending its meagre twenty-one universities (Halsey, 1992, p64).

This continuing rise in demand for university places was not restricted to Britain; applications were increasing throughout Western Europe (Rourke & Brooks, 1966, p155). In America, statisticians observing a similar rise were able to demonstrate a direct correlation between national economic growth and the expansion of university education (Johnson, 1991, p641). These conclusions were accepted in Britain because they underscored an already widely held view that most of society’s problems could be solved by ‘universal education’ (Johnson, 1991, p641). Stevens states that it is ‘unclear’ whether the universities or government research departments first identified a link between higher education and economic growth. However, once made, the connection was to provide a powerful political motive for transforming what had been an elite liberal education into training for the ‘benefit of the economy’ (Stevens, 2004, p33). Economic growth is reliant upon foreign commerce and capital; any government in a global economy that expects to attract them must provide an adequate supply of skilled labour (Carnoy, 2005, p5). After the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, international trade and finance became more integrated and Britain found its ‘post-Sputnik’ competitors to be organised, industrialised and educated (Rietbergen, 1998, p404). Increasingly the notion of ‘knowledge’ as capital was gaining ground (Carnoy, 2005, p5); ‘information and innovation’ are ‘highly portable’ and assimilate easily into existing national cultures (Carnoy, 2005, p3).

By 1959 the homogenising process of international cultural and commercial exchange, combined with growing financial interdependence was recognised and described by the word 'globalization' (Scholte, 2005, p50). Within a year the word was appearing in specialist journals (Guillén, 2001, p5) and within two years a definition of ‘globalization’ was added to Webster’s Dictionary (Webster, 1961, p965; Scholte, 2005, p50).

The recognition by ‘global markets’ of knowledge as a capital commodity had a ‘profound impact’ on the providers and transmitters of that knowledge because they were required to produce much more of it. ‘Globalisation increases the demand for education, especially university education’ (Carnoy, 2005, p3). Dodds argues that the international expansion of higher education institutions encouraged ‘cross-border flows... and global trends such as marketisation’ to such an extent that they are ‘implicated in the promotion of globalisation’ (Dodds, 2008, p505). This ultimately created a circular pattern in which the actions of the universities underpinned globalisation which then put ‘pressure on the educational system to expand’ (Carnoy, 2005, p8). Political opinion makers paraded the benefits of the international market, enhanced educational opportunities and the welfare state as the drivers of Britain’s slow but steady economic recovery (Ross, 2003, p34). Resurgent industries were able to provide a sufficiently wide range of relatively well-paid jobs for their employees to participate in a ‘new consumer society’ (Ross, 2003, p34). The City of London was able to claim back something of a world role when in the late fifties it established a new global market in Eurocurrency, Eurobonds and Euroloans (Scholte, 1999, p28). Rubinstein states that the international reputation of British bankers for ‘honesty and gentlemanly behaviour’ coupled with ‘time-zone centrality’ and the laissez-faire attitude of successive governments promoted the City as a centre for this, essentially EEC business (Rubinstein, 1994, p39).

The ‘optimism’ of the early fifties had, by the end of the decade, become a solid expectation of higher living standards that included such previously unattainable opportunities as a university education (Pratt, 1992, p32). These expectations led the civic universities, in particular, to draw their students from ever widening geographic areas. Many of the civics were disengaging from their local origins and transforming from regional into national institutions (Lowe, 2002, p82). Higher education was receiving unprecedented amounts of state funding. Local ‘social reform’ was marching in time with national ‘economic growth’ (Pratt, 1992, p32).
No longer were less wealthy students likely to be obstructed by ‘economic exclusion’ (Stevens, 2004, p16); by the late fifties, three quarters of all full time university students were in receipt of a scholarship or similar form of financial assistance (Ross, 2003, p36). Although most scholarships were competitive there were additional state and local grants, ‘awards, scholarships and bursaries’ (Anderson, 2006, p139).

The actual amounts, the intended use and the degree of monitoring were extremely varied and depended as much on local politics as they did on ‘economic circumstances’ (Ross, 2003, p26). A total grant to cover fees, accommodation and expenses might come from several different providers all of whom had to be applied to separately. In 1958 a decision was made to amalgamate this 'jungle' of piecemeal payments (Anderson, 2006, p139). Sir Colin Anderson was appointed to head a ‘scholarship’ committee whose task was to gather together all available sources of financial assistance for students and then to create a less complicated ‘unified and uniform national system’ (Longden, 2001, p163).

By 1959, the UGC declared the physical expansion of existing universities had reached its limit (Lowe, 2002, p82) and proposed the building of six new universities (Moodie, 1983, p331). After approval was gained, building commenced on the first institution at a site near Brighton in Sussex (Collini, 2003, p4). When selecting sites for potential universities, the UGC imposed rigid guidelines. The ‘nine-to-five ethos’ was to be avoided in favour of all residential campuses (Anderson, 2006, p137) and each new institution should occupy a plot of at least two hundred acres set in an ‘attractive’ landscape for the benefit of both students and staff (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 548). For the first time a small, but noticeable, fraction of the students on such campuses were the off spring of black immigrants from the ‘former colonies and the new Commonwealth countries’ (Grenville, 2005, p540). Webster argues that at this time the British attitude toward Asian and West Indian immigrants, in particular, was still deserving of the ‘liberal and tolerant reputation’ that prevailed during the Second World War (Webster, 2005, p97). However, with decolonisation and the dismantling of empire came both public and government unease at the large percentage of the world’s population with an entitlement to a British passport (Grenville, 2005, p540).

The Empire ebbs away

The ‘man in the street’ seems not to have been particularly concerned about the independence of British overseas territories until those foreign born ‘subjects of the Crown’ chose to ‘settle in the home country’ (Grenville, 2005, p540). Both Labour and Conservative governments were concerned about this process of ‘colonisation in reverse’ and ‘secret’ inquires were conducted into potential impacts and controls (Webster, 2005, pp97-103).

Lockhart argues that the end of the British Empire was irrevocably signalled by internationally perceived 'loss of face' that followed the Second World War capture of Singapore by the Japanese (Lockhart, 1993, p8). However, Whitehall's Colonial Office had been considering the implications of an imperial finale for very much longer. The conclusions of an inquiry conducted in the 1930's were published in the 1939 pamphlet 'Where are we going?' (Walsh, 2009, p22). The question did not faze Attlee's post war government who were going in any direction that would relieve them of colonial responsibility. After granting Indian independence in 1947, the government vehemently denied that it was planning the 'dissolution of the Empire' (Clarke, 2008, p470). Almost immediately afterward independence was granted to Ceylon and Burma, military commitments to Greece and Turkey were cancelled and the politically messy abandonment of Palestine was begun (Schwarz, 2005, p486). This was the end of the empire and it came with 'astonishing' speed; once decisions had been made the British authorities were on the 'first boat home' often irrespective of the political chaos they left behind (Ferguson, 2003, p356). In 1949, the British Commonwealth was 'reinvented' as simply the Commonwealth to enable the Indian Republic to remain a member without accepting a British monarch as head of state (Darwin, 2011; Ovendale, 1999, p258).

Britain's retreat from 'colonial dominance' continued into the fifties with independence for Malaya, Singapore becoming a self-governing state. International opinion was considerably relived to see an imperial power shed its 'responsibilities and burdens' while maintaining dignity and honour (Grenville, 2005, p539). The mid-fifties saw the retirement of both Churchill and Attlee, with Eden and Gaitskell, respectively, taking up office. Anthony Eden came to the premiership with a reputation for successful international diplomacy and was in the process of improving Anglo-Egyptian relations by agreeing to withdraw British troops from Egypt's Suez Canal area (Grenville, 2005, p543). As the departure proceeded it was closely observed by 'rivals' eager to take Britain's place, in this case it was the Americans and the Soviets who vied for the attention of Egypt's Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser (Grenville, 2005, p536). However, Nasser had his own agenda. He sent Egyptian troops to occupy the British base at Suez, and then declared that the canal, his country's 'only major economic asset' was to be nationalised (Lang, 2006, p360). France and Britain held all of the Suez Canal Company shares, with a French majority so slim that the waterway had long been considered under joint ownership (Ferguson, 2003, p355).

Claiming to have secret intelligence that warned of an impending Israeli-Egyptian war, an Anglo-French 'peacekeeping' force was sent to seize the canal (Morgan, 2000, p70). Before the invasion force could impose its authority Egyptian troops sabotaged the canal by blocking it with sunken ships. The Anglo-French insurgents were made to look incompetent and the subsequent loss of confidence in British international capabilities caused a run on the pound (Perrett, 2007, p401). The crashing currency could only be saved by devaluation or a dollar infusion (Ferguson, 2003, p356). The British government opted for the latter and asked the Americans to bail them out. The Americans would not 'sanction Nasser's overthrow' but offered to underwrite a billion dollar IMF loan dependant on the unconditional withdrawal of all British and French troops (Ferguson, 2003, p356). Britain had no choice but to agree. It was a 'savage revelation' of Britain's decline and severely undermined what little influence the British still had in the Middle East (Darwin, 2011).

In early January 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan spent six weeks visiting Britain's African territories. He was aware that the British public were either 'uninterested' in the future of these colonies or were in favour of their independence (Walsh, 2009, p30) Macmillan also had to consider the implications of Africa's 'rising tide of nationalism' (Ovendale, 1999, p269). He addressed the South African Parliament in February and spoke of the coming of a 'wind of change' which was taken as a warning that Britain was going to 'free itself' of its African ties (Walsh, 2009, p30). Without the Indian trade routes to protect there was no longer any justification in keeping the African territories on which military bases were maintained (Walsh, 2009, p22). Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika had already gained elements of self-government and became independent within two years (Darwin, 2011). 'Realistic' Conservatives did little to hinder these decolonisation policies (Grenville, 2005, p540) while others, in both Westminster and Cape Town, objected to what they considered an abdication of British responsibilities and a 'cynical abandonment' of white colonials (Ovendale, 1999, p270). The 'multiracial' Commonwealth soon found itself at odds with these 'white colonials' and their apartheid policy; South Africa was 'forced' to leave (Grenville, 2005, p539).

After India there were no more 'set-piece confrontations', the empire ebbed away through an uneventful 'process of political and administrative decision-making' (Schwarz, 2005, p482).

Decolonisation became faster as it progressed; many newly independent countries ceased doing business with Britain, trade routes and seaways became redundant along with their attendant ‘outposts and colonial offices’ (Ovendale, 1999, p272). Darwin states that the map of the empire was rolled up in the mid-sixties ‘leaving only the ghost of the British world-system’ (Darwin, 2009, p655). The impact of the final passing of the imperial era on the British public was ‘minimal’ (Schwarz, 2005, p482). Lowe argues that this was also the case for many institutions, including those universities, which seemed incapable of forgetting or escaping their ‘Victorian origins’ (Lowe, 2005, p281).

Higher education in the sixties

Rubinstein argues that Macmillan’s Conservative government also seemed rooted in the past. Their benches were crammed with ‘landed aristocracy’, the personification of the ‘traditional ruling elite’ given a ‘new lease of life’ (Rubinstein, 1994, 17). Macmillan thought this no bad thing and as he led the Conservative Party to a third successive election victory he smugly informed the British public that ‘they had never had it so good' (Ross, 2003, p34). The universities however, had never had so many. While still attempting to appear ‘impervious’ to outside pressures, some institutions were hiding the prospect of being overwhelmed by increasing student numbers (Havighurst, 1966, p526). But the process would continue. The massification of higher education had wide popular support and was promoted by the Trades Union Congress and the Fabian Society who both saw continuing university expansion as a basis of 'equality of opportunity' (Ross, 2003, p36). Not all responses were so enthusiastic; concerns that the expansion was too haphazard were followed by calls for a responsible body to orchestrate a cohesive plan (Ross, 2003, p36).

This was the task that the University Grants Committee was supposed to fulfil after being promoted to a managerial role by the Barlow recommendations (Bond et al, 1955, p10). However, the UGC had managed to sidestep many contentious issues as well as avoid oversight of its actions by any specific government department; it still floated informally between the universities and the Treasury (Tapper & Salter, 1995, p61). This ‘cosy arrangement’ and its attendant lack of ministerial management was thought inappropriate by the Department of Education (Stevens, 2004, p12).

Most government ministers agreed that the UGC did a creditable job, there was also the ‘uneasy suspicion’ that the committee’s own ‘surprisingly satisfactory’ reports of itself were masking an inability to cope (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984, p475). In late 1960 these doubts prompted Prime Minister Macmillan to commission an all encompassing inquiry into the future of higher education (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 548; Lawton, 2004, p59). The investigation would cover the complete range of 'full-time higher education' rather than specifically 'university education' (Dent, 1964, p233). Professor Lionel Robbins of the London School of Economics was invited to chair the committee whose preparitory arrangements were briefly overshadowed by the publication of Sir Colin Anderson’s report on ‘Grants to Students’ (Longden, 2001, p163).

Anderson recommended the replacement of the dauntingly complex process with a scheme based on the single principle of ‘equality of opportunity’ (Ross, 2003, p36). This directed that any student reaching the qualifying standard, for whom there was a university place available, would be provided with financial assistance as a ‘standard entitlement’ (Anderson, 2006, p139). The award was to cover all student fees, plus all or part of a living allowance, depending on the parent’s financial position. The offer of free university places was also, generously, if controversially, extended to overseas students (Ross, 2003, p36). Anderson wanted fees and maintenance to be provided universally without any conditions but the government insisted on a ‘means-tested parental contribution’ to defray the massive expense (Anderson, 2006, p139). Even so, Anderson’s conclusions seem to have been arrived at ‘without an awareness’ of either the scale of the financial commitment or the speed with which higher education was expanding (Longden, 2001, p163). The committee’s deliberations were slanted toward the view that a university education would forever remain a privilege ‘for the few’ (Stevens, 2004, p19). Hence the economic plan that would support their scheme occupied just three pages of the final report (Anderson, 2006, p140).

The committee made no request for Treasury guidance and inexpertly estimated the cost for the first year of grants and allowances to be twenty one million pounds. The actual first year cost was in excess of forty million pounds (Longden, 2001, p163). During the following two years, previously allocated higher education funding was committed to a building programme that saw the commencement of those university projects whose names are said to resemble a Shakespearean cast list, York, Essex,

Kent, Warwick, Lancaster – and East Anglia (Halsey, 1992, p64; Lowe, 2002, p82; Ross, 2003, p33). Constructed of 1960's materials and in the 'modern' architectural style, these became known as the 'plate-glass' universities (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 548), though Anderson suggests that 'brutalist concrete' might have been more apt (Anderson, 2006, p136). These institutions are often thought to have been launched in the 'wake of the Robbins Report' (Barnett, 1987, p303) and are therefore also sometimes referred to as 'Robbins universities' (Butler & Robson, 2003, p138). But the plans for the 'plate-glass' institutions were laid before 1960 (Collini, 2003, p4) and the Robbins Committee began its investigation in February 1961 (Niblett, 1981, p1).
The inquiry took three years and one hundred and eleven meetings to interview expert witnesses, examine written statements and consider the various implications (Robbins, 1963, p1).

In 1963, Macmillan was forced by ill health to step down as Prime Minsiter and Sir Alec Douglas-Home became Conservative 'stop-gap leader' (Ross, 2003, p45). When Harold Wilson, the new leader of the Labour Party, addressed his party conference that year, he promised that a 'New Britain' would shortly be 'forged in the white heat of a technological revolution' (Weir & Beetham, 1999, p108). Days later the Robbins Committee finally published. It was not a 'good moment' (Ross, 2003, p45). Public and politicians alike were distracted and shocked by the assassination of America's President Kennedy. The leaders of the three major British political parties flew to Washington and Parliament was adjourned for the day of the President's funeral (Havighurst, 1966, pp474-475). It is doubtful that the recommendations of the Robbins Committee were an 'immediate government priority' (Ross, 2003, p45).

The Robbins Report

There were however, many in the 'educational world' eager to examine Robbins' findings (Morris, 1964, p5). The main thrust of the report was enthusiastically supportive of the measures taken since 1945 and advised that the expansion should continue because the expected demand for university places was ultimately likely to exceed fifty percent of the relevant age group (Pratt, 1992, p32; Anderson, 2006, p129). The committee observed that most Western industrial societies were increasing their investment in higher education facilities and there was an expectation that the British government would do the same. The demand existed and it was logical that it should call 'forth the supply' (Crick, 1990, p21).

Robbins gathered together Britain's 'loose collection' of universities, colleges and academies to create a nationally directed 'system' (Scott, 1988, p34). The Committee wanted to see the wider availability of different 'kinds' of higher education and advocated an extension to an existing programme whereby non-university institutions were able to award nationally recognised degrees (Lowe, 2002, p83). To this end, it was suggested that a Council for National Academic Awards should be established (Robbins, 1963, p142) to oversee a 'systematic co-ordination' of qualifications policy in institutions of higher education that would be, in all other respects, autonomous (Robbins, 1963, p265). There was also the recommendation that all Colleges of Advanced Technology (CAT's) be elevated to university status (Pratt, 1992, p32). This measure alone would increase the total number of university level institutions by 'at least' twenty-eight (Carswell, 1988, p25).

The unique position of the UGC was 'fervently endorsed' by Robbins (Anderson, 2006, p115), although the conveniently close relationship between the universities, the UGC and the Treasury was generally thought to be a 'weakness' (Fowler, 1973, p199). The main concern was that, although the UGC handled public money, it was able to escape the 'obligation of public accountability' because it was under Treasury rather than ministry management (Robbins, 1963, p236). The greatly enlarged network of higher educational institutions recommended by the committee would place the UGC in command of a vastly increased budget for which some form of 'ministerial responsibility' would be a political necessity (Robbins, 1963, p275). Robbins determined that the structure of the UGC should remain an 'essential ingredient' of future plans (Robbins, 1963, p237) but that it would be better considered as a 'grants commission' with supervisory power rather than an overall authority (Lowe, 2002, p83).

The committee thought that the process should be overseen by a single authoritative body but did not feel that either the Treasury or the Ministry of Education could be considered appropriate managers for the 'guardianship of higher culture' (Anderson, 2006, p154). Their suggested alternative was that all of the cultural 'advisory and distributing intermediaries', such as the research councils, the Arts Council, the BBC and the UGC be brought together under the management of a specially created ministry of arts and science (Anderson, 2006, p154; Robbins, 1963, p276).

The government sidestepped the idea of a ministerial-arts connection and instead bundled all of the education affiliates into the newly created Department of Education and Science (Ross, 2003, p45). The UGC had been brought into the political fold (Fowler, 1973, p199).

The Robbins Report was ‘promptly accepted’ by Douglas-Home (Havighurst, 1966, p527) and six hundred and fifty million pounds was allocated to cover ‘capital expenditure’ over ten years (Lawton, 2004, p60). For any government to commit so quickly to educational funding was ‘exceptional’ (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 549) and in this case remarkable in that it came from an administration with an eight hundred million pound balance of payments deficit (Laybourn, 2002, p135). This swift and unquestioningly acceptance was widely seen in the light of the approaching general election and considered an attempt by ‘ailing’ Conservatives to appear ‘populist rather than elitist’ (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 549). As the 1964 election loomed, Wilson, Beveridge’s one time reseacher and an economics don (Stevens, 2004, p26), was able to ridiclue the Conservative’s muddled economic planning with ease (Laybourn, 2002, p135). Wilson’s financial acumen impressed the electorate, particularly after Douglas-Home’s admission that he favoured working out economic problems with matchsticks (Laybourn, 2002, p135; Pimlott, 2000, p34).

The 1964 election campaigns were the first in Britain to feature significantly on television with opposing party leaders obligingly granting both formal and informal interviews. Wilson appeared most confident. He was the ‘meritocratic whizzkid’ who subtly confirmed the viewer’s perception of Douglas-Home as the ‘aristocratic throwback’ (Plowright, 2006, p142). When it came to the vote the result was dramatically close, it was a Labour victory but they were just fourteen seats ahead of the Conservatives and had an overall majority of only four seats (Lawton, 2004, p66). Within six months Alec Douglas-Home was replaced as Conservative leader in part because of his poor television performances (Mughan, 2000, p26).

Along with the reins of government, the Labour Party was handed a very large overseas debt (Laybourn, 2002, p56). This forced a diversion of the funding intended the expanding higher education sector on which the 'white hot technological revolution’ was heavily reliant (Lowe, 2002, p83). The dilemma of how to provide more universities without additional cost was solved by Robbin’s recommendation that colleges of advanced technology (CATS) be granted university status.

This posed no logistical problem because they were already ‘so much like universities’ (Pratt, 1992, p32). It could not however, be regarded as a long term solution. While it might be cost effective to simply rename existing institutions it would also increase the number of ‘university’ students, who would then be eligible for financial support. Since such an obligation would have ‘dire consquences for the public purse’ (Lowe, 2002, p83) government ministers and senior civil servants formulated a viable alternative. Their scheme hinged upon another Robbins recommendation; the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) (Bell, 1999, p188). The idea called for the permanent separation of the university-style ‘academic education’ from the more college based ‘vocational education’ (Ross, 2003, p48). One higher educational group would comprise the newly expanded universities while the other would handle technical and vocational subjects and be known as ‘polytechnics’ (Collini, 2003, p5). Some seventy colleges of ‘technology, art and commerce’, were selected for combination into thirty larger units to be designated as polytechnics (Ross, 2003, p47). Study in an institution of either group of a university level course would earn a university level degree because the polytechnics would be backed by the ‘degree awarding status’ of the CNAA (Johnston, 1998, p260). With the two sectors separated by a ‘binary’ line, Wilson’s government could provide the thousands of higher education places recommended by Robbins while keeping the polytechnics in the ‘public sector’ which obliged local authorities to fund them in same way as they had the colleges (Pratt, 1992, p34; Watson & Taylor, 1998, p3).

The Labour government proudly promoted the ‘strangely unsocialist’ binary line (Bell, 1999, p188), while critics indicated that it was simply a numbers and names game to provide ‘inferior’ higher education ‘on the cheap' (Lawton, 2004, pp60-69). Lord Robbins declared the strategy a ‘perversion’ of his committee’s intentions (Pratt, 1992, p34). But, for the government, this manoeuvre achieved several desirable objectives. By designating ‘university’ and ‘public’ higher education facilities as two halves of a single system, the sector was practically doubled ‘overnight’ (Driver, 1972, p329). This allowed the ‘financially-distraught’ Labour Government to claim that the recommended higher education expansion was progressing as planned (Driver, 1972, p329) and that there were no plans for more universities for at least ten years (Anderson, 2006, p154).

Attempts at educational equality

With higher edcation temporarily pushed into the background, the Labour administration turned its attention to its election commitment to eliminate selection for secondary schooling (Halpin et al, 1996, p20). Labour's leaders were determined to abolish the 'dreaded' eleven plus examination and their party membership had officially committed to a comprehensive schooling policy in 1951 (Stevens, 2004, p28). By the time they were returned to office in 1964 it had became part of Labour's overall education strategy. Many Labour Party members felt that the lack of equality in education was due to the 'continued existence' of public and grammar schools (Lawton, 2004, p62). Serious consideration was given to the possibility of integrating the public schools into the 'state comprehensive system' and a feasibility study was commissioned (Halpin et al, 1996, p20). Most of the great Victorian public schools were experiencing falling student numbers and financial difficulties. The study, when it appeared, reported that it was 'not worth doing much' with these schools as they appeared to be in terminal decline; the advice was 'to do nothing' and simply let them close (Stevens, 2004, p27). With some relief that this thorny problem had solved itself, the report was 'quietly shelved' (Halpin et al, 1996, p20). Ironically the elements that were to save the Victorian public schools were now all in place. Parents who believed that their children would have benefited from attending one of the now endangered grammar schools began to look to the public schools. If they could afford to 'spend heavily' on education it made sense to do so on their child's secondary school as any university education would be paid for by the state. Within five years, most of the public schools were 'thriving again' (Stevens, 2004, pp27-30).

Faced with the 'continued exclusion' from higher education of those in 'lower income groups'; a Labour Party study group began considering a universally accessable 'University of the Air' in March 1963 (OU website, 2012). Distance learning was not a new idea (Lawton, 2004, p71). Children in Australia's remote outback had received primary and some secondary education by radio as pupils of the 'school of the air' since 1951 (Barker, 2000, p272). The University of South Africa had long used similar methods to provide academic degree courses (Altbach, 2004, p20). Harold Wilson was enthusiastic about a 'home study' university whose courses could be delivered via television or radio (OU website, 2012).

When Labour came to power in 1963 Jennie Lee, Minister for the Arts, was given responsibility for moving the 'University of the Air' into the realm of reality (Lawton, 2004, p60). She was determined that the project should provide higher educational opportunities that were free of the 'grant and selection system' but would still maintain the academic rigor required for its degrees to be considered the equal of those obtained from a 'conventional' university (Anderson, 2006, p141).

Lee's Advisory Committee presented its finished proposal in February 1966 (OU website, 2012). Wilson had by that time sensed that the Labour government's popularity had peaked and called a snap election in March (Lawton, 2004, p66). The 'open university' was included in Labour's manifesto as an election commitment (OU website, 2012). The final vote revealed another Labour victory with an increased majority of ninety-eight seats (Lawton, 2004, p66). Wilson afterward acknowledged that the result may have been assisted by England's winning of the football World Cup (Lang, 2006, p364). The mandate enabled Wilson to pursue his 'enthusiasm' for technology (Stevens, 2004, p26) and by now the promise of an open university had become a 'pet scheme' (Lawton, 2004, p70). Jenny Lee remained at the helm, while Wilson fended off attempts by the Treasury to reduce its funding (Lawton, 2004, p70). Key members of the new university's administrative staff were appointed during 1968 and offices in Milton Keynes was selected for the the main administrative hub of the institution (OU website, 2012). In 1969, the Open University was officially opened and granted its Royal Charter (Trowler, 2002, p75) its first students were enrolled in 1971 (Anderson, 2006, p141), external examination results for the end of that year showed a 'remarkably high' seventy five percent pass rate (Driver, 1972, p339). Clarke and Quill cite the Open University as Wilson's 'greatest political legacy' (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 549). Lawton argues that it was one of those 'rare' occasions when socialist ideals were imposed upon the 'elitist world' of higher education with 'great success' (Lawton, 2004, pp70-76).

The Open University established a winning formula that was duplicated around the world (Lawton, 2004, p71). It expanded the concept of 'distance learning' beyond previous expectations to deliver university level courses. The model has become 'increasingly global' and provides students, particually those in developing countries, with 'new opportunities to access knowledge' (Potashnik & Capper, 1998, p42). Satalite television and the internet have greatly accelerated the 'globalization of distance education' (Potashnik & Capper, 1998, p45).

This process has raised questions of accreditation and quality control, an internationally recognised body capable of providing a 'stamp of approval' was required (McBurnie, 2000, p23). In 1996 representatives from UNESCO and a range of international educational institutions gathered in London for an inaugural conference to launch the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) (McBurnie, 2000, pp23-24). This organisation has been granted the responsibility for the 'global certification and review process' that is applied to education that is 'delivered across borders' (Potashnik & Capper, 1998, p45).

Harold Wilson, would not have been aware of this ongoing international impact. Ironically, for him the Open University never quite fulfilled expectations. This was partly because it clashed with the almost immovable 'traditional culture' of higher education but was also due to a lack of funds (Lawton, 2004, p71). The Labour government was unable to escape the massive burden of debt they had inherited from the preceding Conservative administration (Newton, 2010, p912). Wilson had avoided devaluing the pound when first elected but this continual 'aching tooth' seemed to present an obstacle to every scheme to stabilise the economy (Pimlott, 2000, p34). Labour had been forced to abandon domestic modernisation in favour of shoring up sterling overseas. However, by November 1967 the Cabinet had to accept that their economic position was untenable; they agreed to devalue the pound by fourteen percent (Newton, 2010, pp912-914). This did alleviate the immediate pressure but the 'fillip' was short lived; within two years most of Britain's trading partners had also devalued thus re-establishing the unfortunate status quo (Wasserstein, 2007, p534).

Many Britain's saw devaluation as a 'national humiliation' (Wasserstein, 2007, p534) and in an effort to dispel the growing atmosphere of 'gloom and cynicism', Wilson made a televised address to the nation. He assured viewers that devaluation was intended to strengthen the position of British currency abroad (Pimlott, 2000, p34) and would not reduce the value of the 'pound in your pocket' (Lang, 2006, p364). But he was wrong and prices increased. Wilson's 'ill-advised' words hung 'round his neck like an albatross' for the rest of his political career (Pimlott, 2000, p34).

The next general election was due in 1970 and Wilson called it for June. Like almost everyone else he put his faith in the opinion polls and expected another Labour win.

He was disappointed (Pearce, 2008, p5). After the count it was the Conservative's who claimed victory with a majority of thirty seats and it was Edward Heath who became Prime Minister (Lawton, 2004, p77). His premiership was to be four years of 'exceptionally bad luck' (Pearce, 2008, p8), dogged as it was by industrial disputes, economic upheaval and an international oil crisis (Wasserstein, 2007, p534).

Britain joins the European Economic Community

In 1950, Edward Heath was elected to Parliament; his maiden speech explored the rather unpopular theme of greater European unity (Pearce, 2008, p2). Despite Britain's post-war economic problems, it was still the 'wealthiest country in Europe' (Carreras, 2006, p273), so saw no need to consider 'unity' with its neighbours or even its erstwhile enemies. Heath's speech was not well received and he did not speak again in the Commons for nine years (Pearce, 2008, p2). The rest of Europe spent the next decade struggling to re-establish their inter-continental trade (Black, 2009, p24). The British played little part in this process, having convinced themselves that they had no need of assistance from the rest of Europe (Lang, 2006, p360). Instead, they were counting on what little remained of their fast diminishing empire and the extensive overseas network of the Commonwealth. This proved to be illusory. Within a very few years the British economy was lagging behind that of every other major Western country (Carreras, 2006, p272). The intra-European exports market, in which Britain played no significant part, was developing well and delivered a 'huge boom' to continental economies (Black, 2009, p24).

In 1958, six of these successful trading countries became officially bound by the Treaty of Rome as the European Economic Community (EEC). This was a free trading area protected from non-member countries by import tariffs (Carreras, 2006, p318). British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan thought this was a fine idea; if Britain joined the EEC its European trade would be tariff free and imperial preference could be relied upon to provide a supply of cheap food from the Commonwealth. The existing EEC countries refused to accept this duel arrangement and Britain was turned away (Lloyd, 2001, p195).

This rejection rankled with Macmillan and shortly afterward he sanctioned the launch of a 'rival' initiative, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Six non-EEC countries agreed to join, but none profited greatly. The countries involved were not traditional trading partners or in some cases not traders at all (Lang, 2006, p360). The undeniable economic advances being made by EEC member countries convinced Macmillan that Britain must become part of it. It was a controversial decision, which generated considerable parliamentary debate. Questions were raised in support and opposition of British EEC involvement and the future of existing trade arrangements (Falshaw, 2004, p49). Macmillan promised that he would endeavour to gain a concession that would allow British imports of Commonwealth produce (Lloyd, 2001, p195). In July 1961 the EEC was approached with an official request for British membership (Johnson, 1991, p601). It was rejected. A variety of reasons were given, a variety of adjustments were made Britain reapplied and was again rejected (Carreras, 2006, p318). The most vocal objections came from President de Gaulle of France who simply did not wish to see Britain as a member. He vetoed the membership requests because he was convinced that Britain was acting as a 'Trojan Horse' for American businessmen who wanted a foothold in Europe (Caddick-Adams, 2001, p250).

Two unconnected events brought about a rapid change in the situation. First, in 1969, de Gaulle resigned the French Presidency. Second in 1970, Edward Heath, whose 'number one priority' was British EEC membership, became Prime Minister (Pearce, 2008, p5). Heath's assurances of the sincerity of Britain's application appeared to be supported by the coincidental decimalisation of the British currency in February 1971 (Weale, 2000, p78). The components of the pound sterling were changed into the European decimal system as the final phase of what had been a ten-year plan. The original intention had not been to align with continental neighbours but to aid financial integration with the already successfully decimalised markets of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand (Weale, 2000, p78).

Although Heath did not have to face de Gaulle, there were still considerable problems. He not only had to 'calm French fears' over Britain's relationship with America but also had to win over a sizable faction of his own Parliamentary party who were against Britain's entry (Pearce, 2008, p5). Both Conservative and Labour politicians gloomily predicted a loss of Parliamentary authority (Falshaw, 2004, p49). The bulk of the British public were largely unconcerned, their European interests being restricted to continental holidays, cars, food and football matches (Morgan, 2000, p84).

Regardless of this lack of enthusiasm Heath was prepared to trade off some ‘national interests’ to gain acceptance for British EEC entry (Black, 2009, p173). The Bill for application came before Parliament as a free vote; Heath was hoping that Conservative objectors would be outnumbered by the party traditionalists who preached ‘loyalty to the leader’ regardless of personal view (Gifford, 2008, p60). This assumption was correct and the Bill was passed. Heath’s campaign moved onto Europe where he ‘played down’ connections with America and assured the French that the British were ‘trustworthy’ (Falshaw, 2004, p50). It was a success. In July 1972 it was agreed that Britain should be admitted in January 1973 (Black, 2009, p173). There was no public consultation but a post-legislative referendum held in 1975 (the first to include the whole the United Kingdom) revealed that sixty seven percent of those who voted were in favour of continued EEC membership (Morgan, 2000, p84). Lang argues that this apparent approval was simply the nation expressing the view that ‘now-we’re-in-it-we-might-as-well-stay’ (Lang, 2006, p360). Gifford agrees, and states that, warned of approaching economic turmoil, the British public did not so much endorse the EEC as the sense of comfort and security it brought at a time of further ‘decline and crisis’ (Gifford, 2008, p63).

The end of the Bretton Woods system

Throughout this period the world’s trading nations were conducting international business via a fixed rate exchange mechanism that was pegged to the United States dollar (Carreras, 2006, p318). This was the carefully crafted economic heart of the 1944 Bretton Woods accord which, although it had never operated exactly as intended, provided the principles of international ‘economic policy-making’ and supported a ‘lively economic exchange’ (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p123). To ensure stability the US dollar had been fixed at the 1934 gold price and was convertible at the rate of thirty-five printed dollars to one ounce of the yellow metal (Wasserstein, 2007, p628). Initially America’s commitment to maintain this ratio generated enough confidence in international trade to create a boom; a ‘golden age’ in which the income of almost every industrialised country, including those in the Soviet bloc, showed a significant increase (Carreras, 2006, p318). Though the Bretton Woods system relied on stability, its component countries were not heavily integrated.

National governments retained the freedom to control their own overseas trade and to exercise domestic financial policies ‘without excessive concern’ for how these impacted on the global markets (Milgate & Stimson, 2009, p29). The days of such independent action were numbered.

America’s post war economic supremacy attracted foreign investors, success breeds success, and by 1950 the US treasury was holding seventy percent of the world gold reserve, a total of almost twenty two thousand tons (Anikin, 1983, p163). As European and Japanese manufacturing recovered and began exporting, they found a ready market in America. The massive US treasury gold holdings coupled with acceptance of the US dollar as the ‘world’s reserve currency’ created a complacency about balance of payments (Quinlan, 2011, p10). US imports rose and exports dropped until by 1969 there were enough paper dollars in ‘foreign hands’ to buy the now depleted contents of Fort Knox ‘three times over’ (Albritton, 2009, p68). The Bretton Woods system rested on the belief that the dollar was ‘as good as gold’, but with the suspicion that gold might actually be ‘better’, European national banks began to covert (Anikin, 1983, p163). France was first to cash in its dollar holdings. West Germany not only liquidated its dollars but also resigned from Bretton Woods. The floating Deutsche Mark quickly rose in value against the dollar (Wasserstein, 2007, p628). America was losing its financial grip on Europe at the same time as becoming more deeply involved in war in Vietnam. As national expenditure rose, America’s economy began to ‘overheat’. This encouraged inflation, which bit into deficit payments and widened the gap still further (Cohen, 2001, p100).

The United States dollar was coming under increasing strain; after Switzerland announced its withdrawal from Bretton Woods the US Congress began recommending devaluation (Fulcher, 2004, p94). Under the Bretton Woods ‘rules’ the US treasury could not devalue on the recommendation of Congress, but as the most powerful player in the game the American government could simply ‘change the rules’ (Cohen, 2001, p100). Appeals were made to the European countries to revalue their currencies against the dollar to re-establish equilibrium. They refused (Ferguson, 2001, p158). In August 1971, President Richard Nixon was left with no other choice but to suspend the convertibility of the dollar with immediate effect. This closing of the ‘gold window’ at the US treasury signaled the abandonment of the entire Bretton Woods financial system (Anikin, 1983, p163; Bordo, 1993, p136; Quinlan, 2011, p10).

The world currencies went into free fall. They floated against each other until all parties arrived at a mutually acceptable level of exchange (Cohen, 2001, p100). Bretton Woods had effectively 'caged' the global financial markets, protecting member countries from economic instability and 'financial anarchy' (Quinlan, 2011, p11). Global capital was no longer to be restricted. Quinlan argues that although President Nixon is not widely remembered for fostering the spread of economic globalisation and the opening up of the free markets, this was exactly the result of his decision (Quinlan, 2011, p9). Bretton Woods was a regulatory control intended by Keynes and White to 'suppress capital mobility' and to restrict the activities of banks to the countries in which they were based (Quinlan, 2011, p11). Severing the link between gold and the dollar signaled the disintegration of Bretton Woods and its replacement by floating exchange rates and unbridled currency speculation (Cohen, 2001, p100). These were the foundations on which British and American politicians would encourage the building of globalised 'unregulated capital markets' (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p126).

Britain's Heath government

While Richard Nixon contemplated the impact of his 'momentous decision' (Quinlan, 2011, p10), Edward Heath imposed a range of inflation controls that included an eight percent pay claim limit (Gildar, 2001, p112). The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was the first to challenge government pay guidelines with a deliberately provocative demand for a twenty five percent increase (Gildar, 2001, p112). The government, via the National Coal Board, offered seven and a half percent, the NUM turned it down and their members voted to strike (Beckett, 2011). The industrial action started on January 9th 1972. It introduced the previously unseen manoeuvre of mass picketing to prevent the normal working of almost any facility connected with fuel processing or distribution (Johnson, 1991, p603). The impact of the strike was increased by dockworkers who refused to unload imported coal and truck drivers who would not cross picket lines at power station gates. The 'contingency plans' to have the army requisition and distribute coal and other fuel stocks were abandoned for fear of totally alienating the trade unions (Travis, 2002). On February 9th Heath declared a state of emergency and imposed a three-day working week on British industry to conserve fuel (Pearce, 2008, p6). Nine days later the government offered the mineworkers a twenty percent pay increase. The NUM's executive, 'sensing weakness' refused.

They would settle for nothing less than twenty five percent, plus free transport to and from the pithead, free work clothing and ‘increased overtime payments’ (Beckett, 2011). By the end of the following day every demand had been conceded, the NUM’s industrial action had been ‘wholly successful’ (Morgan, 2000, p78). After another ballot to officially accept the deal the miners returned to work on February 28th (Beckett, 2011).

The miners might have been satisfied but Heath would find little solace in the economy. The absence of the Bretton Woods controls was beginning to tell. Unpredictable commodity prices and international currencies that ‘gyrated wildly’ had ‘transformed terms of trade’ (Wasserstein, 2007, p627). Businesses hedged against the fluctuating market by increasing prices and industrialised countries began to experience inflation (Cohen, 2001, p100). Britain’s 'cool' and 'groovy' nineteen-sixties ‘growth in consumerism’ (Falshaw, 2004, p47) disguised the reality of a country that simply ‘lurched’ from one financial crisis to the next (Morgan, 2000, p77). Prime Minister Heath struggled with rising inflation growing unemployment and his ‘savagely’ deteriorating relations with the trades unions (Pearce, 2008, p6).

If Edward Heath was having a bad time, his ministers certainly fared no better. His Education Secretary, Margaret Thatcher, was desperate to move to another department but, as the Cabinet’s ‘token woman’, was trapped in this ‘harmless’ post (Batteson, 1997, p364). Thatcher refused to keep quiet, she roundly condemned Education as an ‘awful’ department (Stevens, 2004, p35) whose ‘self-righteously socialist’ staff were obstructive and insubordinate (Stevens, 2004, p37). Equally infuriating for Mrs Thatcher was the procession of comprehensive school schemes requiring approval. The process of combining grammar and secondary modern schools into comprehensive’s was by this time well underway and had the support of most local authorities as well as parents and the teaching unions (Lawton, 2004, p78). Regardless of Thatcher’s attempts ‘to slow the trend’ (Lowe, 2005, p286), she was obliged to approve more than two thousand five hundred comprehensive schools (Plowright, 2006, p290) and in the process closed more grammar schools than any previous minister (Lawton, 2004, p78).

Ten years had passed since the government had accepted the Robbins Committee’s advice to continue the expansion of the ‘traditional university experience’ (Anderson, 2006, pviii).

The polytechnics provided over two hundred thousand new higher education places (Anderson, 1992, p195), but reaching numerical targets did not automatically improve the national economy. Government ministers complained that the universities were not adapting fast enough to keep the country competitive. It was this 'imbalance' that the polytechnics were expected to correct (Bocock & Taylor, 2003, p227). Lawton argues that, from inception it was 'almost inevitable' that the polytechnics would be regarded as 'second best' (Lawton, 2004, p70). Many polytechnic management teams fought this denigration by attempting to realign their institutions more closely with the prestigious Oxbridge model (Lowe, 2002, p84). The Robbins recommendation that a student's university experience should be 'traditional' was taken to heart (Anderson, 2006, pviii). The polytechnics followed the Redbrick universities into the 'classic pattern of academic drift' (Barnes, 1996, p283); they sought to improve their status by replacing science and technology courses with the 'arts, humanities and social sciences', subjects that had not been intended to be taught on the public side of the binary line (Lawton, 2004, p70). For decades the Victorian civic universities had tried to 'ape the Oxbridge model' (Stevens, 2004, p12), it was a status that received further endorsement when the sixties plate-glass universities strove to attain similar goals (Anderson, 2006, pviii). Then the 1970's polytechnics ambitiously sought to 'mop up' the overwhelming demand for arts and humanities courses that the universities could not cope with. The whole higher education network was starting to look 'strangely like Oxford and Cambridge' (Lowe, 2002, p84).

These 'ambitions' were expensive and the combination of post-Robbins expansion and increasing prices ominously signalled the 'financial trouble' that was to come (Anderson, 2006, pviii). The Department of Education and Science published a white paper, 'The Framework for Expansion' in late 1972; it was a ten-year plan for a 'programme of educational advance' (Thatcher, 1972). The paper predicted that three quarters of a million students would be in higher education by 1981; this included overseas students who were now required to pay a contribution toward their fees. Education was beginning to be appreciated as a 'reasonable economic export' (Clarke & Quill, 1999, 549). Although the 'Framework' praised higher education for the contribution it made toward the 'personal development' of its students there was concern among politicians that universities provided too much social study and not enough vocational training (Stevens, 2004, pp39-40).

Hence the White Paper stressed that it would be the ‘polytechnics and other non-university colleges’ who would be required to increase their student places, but they would have to do so without additional funding. The DES instructed that ‘scope must be found for economies’ (Thatcher, 1972). Lawton states that 'Framework’ white paper led to a programme of reorganisation in which polytechnics and universities were either closed or merged causing ‘large numbers of redundancies’, and that plans for new school buildings and reduced class sizes had to be abandoned (Lawton, 2004, p80).

The UGC, once a welcome protector and simple conduit of funding now also delivered ministerial warnings. Higher education was told to support both continued expansion and reduced expenditure (Stevens, 2004, p40). For over half a century university administrators had applied to the UGC for a four-year grant two years in advance, but this practice was being slowly undermined by inflation (Scott, 1978, p35). As each of the awards fell due, some marginal increase was added to take account of rising prices but future costs became so difficult to predict that in 1974 the UGC was forced to abandon its quinquennial grant scheme (Anderson, 2006, p160). Shortly afterward the UGC lost its management of academic salaries to the National Incomes Commission, and the future control of university fees to the Department of Education and Science (Clarke & Quill, 1999, p549). While Heath’s administration was quietly neutering the UGC (Lawton, 2004, p80) the Premier himself was preparing for his ‘finest political hour’ (Falshaw, 2004, p50). On January 1st 1973, Britain officially became a fully-fledged member of the European Economic Community. This despite the disgruntled ‘mutterings’ of some parliamentary factions and with only the halfhearted ‘acquiesce’ of the British public (Wasserstein, 2007, p662).

Almost as soon as Britain entered the EEC, the ‘continuously rising prosperity’ that had powered the European post-war boom, began to slump (Eley, 2002, p406). The period of ‘social peace’ and economic stability enjoyed by most western industrialised nations had been deteriorating since the mid 1960’s (Carreras, 2006, p320). By the early 70’s, many European economies were ‘teetering’ and for much the same reasons; prosperity had nurtured inflation, which had led to rising unemployment and labour unrest (Eley, 2002, p406). Europe’s ‘long boom’ had relied on the recently abandoned Bretton Woods accords to ensure the availability of the cheap petroleum products that supported its economic stimulus (Albritton, 2009, p56).

These fuel requirements were largely met by the rapidly expanding oil fields of the Middle East with few imports from the newly discovered oil fields in Southeast Asia and Africa (Hervey, 1994, p1). The international extraction, transport and refining of crude oil was dominated by a group of seven western multinational oil companies known as the ‘Seven Sisters’. These companies had become extremely wealthy by ensuring an abundance of cheap fuel to the customer while depressing prices at source (Trumbore, 2012). In 1960 delegates from five oil-producing countries assembled in Baghdad to found the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). This organisation claimed ‘permanent sovereignty’ on behalf of its members over any resources that existed within their borders. However, they could not control international pricing because the amount of crude oil they were producing far exceeded demand. Within ten years another five countries had joined OPEC and the demand for crude oil had risen exponentially (Hervey, 1994, p2).

The United States, whose own oil reserves were ‘dwindling’ (Hervey, 1994, p2), was now importing thirty five percent of its petro-chemical products (Trumbore, 2012). The Seven Sisters ‘ruled the roost’ (Trumbore, 2012) throughout the fifties and the sixties. They had manipulated the oil supply to make sure it remained ‘plentiful and cheap’ (Hervey, 1994, p1). Despite the US and the Western world being drawn ever deeper into an 'inflationary spiral’ the price of crude oil remained remarkably stable (Trumbore, 2012). Thus, the ‘stage was set’, for the increasingly disgruntled oil producing countries of the Middle East to exploit their advantage (Hervey, 1994, p2).

In October 1973, Egypt and Syria attempted to regain territory lost in their 1967 war with Israel by launching a surprise attack to coincide with the Israeli observance of the religious festival of Yom Kippur (Black, 2009, p161). Initial Israeli losses were reversed when their troops took to the field armed with superior American military hardware. This 'interference' was strongly resented by the OPEC Arab states and it was decided that the 'pro-Israel stance' taken by many Western countries deserved retaliation (Carreras, 2006, p320). Before the end of October OPEC announced that no more oil would be sold to the United States. They would continue to sell to Western Europe but at twice the previous price (Knes, 2012). The Israeli counter-offensive was successful and for a second time the invaders were defeated. A ceasefire officially ended the war in November (Trumbore, 2012). The reaction of OPEC was to double the price of oil bound for Western Europe yet again (Hervey, 1994, p2).

The countries of Western Europe had no choice but to reduce their consumption of crude oil (Falshaw, 2004, p50). Britain had missed the European economic boom and was now starved of the energy to run its industries; the national decline was beginning to look 'terminal' (Morgan, 2000, p78). Living standards were sliding and the more militant trades unions were making industrial unrest and strikes a 'fixture' (Falshaw, 2004, p49). The United States and much of Europe were experiencing the miserable combination of zero economic growth and inflation, since described by some economists as 'stagflation' (Black, 2009, p161). 'Rocketing' fuel prices (Macalister, 2011) forced Heath to cut oil imports by a further fifteen percent (Falshaw, 2004, p50). The government decided that fuel for industry was a greater priority than for motorists. Long queues at petrol filling stations led to serious consideration of the reissue of wartime ration books (Macalister, 2011). There was good reason to hope that some relief might be provided by the 1969 discovery of oil and gas beneath the North Sea. However, huge rigs and pipelines first had to be designed, built and located in an inhospitable environment. The most optimistic prediction suggested that it would be seven years before Britain would see either oil or any benefits to public finance (Kemp, 2003). The North Sea venture was unlikely to bother the oil-exporting states of the Middle East in the short term. The cost of imported crude oil, refined petroleum products and associated commodities continued to escalate (Gildar, 2001, p122).

As the cost of living ratcheted up, so the trades unions demanded proportionally higher pay for their members (Macalister, 2011). The National Union of Mineworkers claimed that their membership had slipped from being Britain's best-paid industrial workers to the eighteenth (Cook, 2004, p9). To restore the status quo the NUM demanded a thirty five percent pay increase (Cook, 2004, p9). Unsurprisingly, the National Coal Board refused to even consider it and equally unsurprisingly, the NUM, 'emboldened' by the crippling price of crude oil (Wasserstein, 2007, p633), began balloting for their second strike in two years (Gildar, 2001, p122). In November 1973, they decided to take full advantage of the situation by announcing an immediate overtime ban and a national strike to start on February 9th 1974 (Gildar, 2001, p122). For a second time Heath was forced to cope with the disruption of a miners strike without having been allowed the time to take 'adequate precautions' (Plowright, 2006, p140).

The country was already short of oil and coal; the government had no time to ‘dither’ (Cook, 2004, p9). Heath made a television broadcast declaring both an immediate state of emergency and a three-day working week for business and industry to start on January 1st 1974 (Cook, 2004, p9). Apart from the profound economic and political repercussions of the three-day week, Falshaw states that there were social implications caused by factory, shop and school closures, people living by candlelight, a 50mph speed limit and no television after 10.30pm (Falshaw, 2004, p50).

Official talks quickly broke down with the miners defiantly maintaining their ‘bloody-minded but principled ground’ (Eley, 2002, p390). A series of secret discussions established that the miners’ demands could be met by extra payments for travel time to the coalface and bath time at the end of a shift. Since these payments had not previously existed they could be added to the previous pay offer without breaching the government’s income policy (Cook, 2004, p10). On December 21st gleeful NUM officials explained this clever compromise to Harold Wilson (Cook, 2004, p10). He was furious that the NUM, the ‘elite troops’ of the trade’s union movement (Plowright, 2006, p291) could be bought off by a floundering Tory government. The next day Wilson held a press conference to publically announce the Labour Party’s ‘solution’ to the miners strike. It was the ‘bath time’ compromise. Since no government would agree to a measure suggested by an opposition party the measure was effectively ‘sabotaged’ (Cook, 2004, p11). Heath was left with no choice but to call a snap election for February 1974 (Lawton, 2004, p77).

This chapter had dealt with the changes in British society wrought by the aftermath of the Second World War. Most notably these included the birth of the welfare state and the loss of imperial territory but there was also an important expansion of higher education provision. After research had shown links between the amount of money spent on higher education and the national economy, the government had pledged a considerable increase in financial support. It was also a period in which Americanisation as an element of 'globalisation' had become observable and was becoming a subject of study. Britain entered the European Economic Community as the abandonment of the Bretton Woods agreements left the world currencies floating in an open market. The world’s economies were ready for deregulation.

Chapter 5 1974-1989

This chapter deals with the rise of neoliberalism and the commodification of English higher education. I discuss how Britain's government shed much of its public sector responsibility and permanently recast universities as elements of the national economy. I also explore how the successful outcome of the Falklands war and the defeat of the coal miners union assisted Margaret Thatcher to three consecutive election victories and provided a powerful mandate for change. Few areas of British life were unaffected and higher education became an early target. I explain how Thatcher's view of knowledge for its own sake being an unaffordable luxury led to the notion that university investment should show acceptable dividends. This new approach paved the way for the abolition of the UGC and provided a powerful motive for the governmental management of the universities. In the quest for more 'useful' graduates, ministers pressured the English universities, once the inspiration for educational institutions throughout the empire, into adopting managerial methods that might more commonly be associated with manufacturing. The experience of a university education was transformed into a measurable and purchasable service, in which the institutions would have to complete with each other to survive.

I also describe how America's President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher not only genuinely liked each other but also shared a neoliberal ideology. The collective economic and political power of two leaders was ultimately wielded to hasten the fall of Soviet Russia and to convince many of the world's governments of the benefits of neoliberalist free trade. The end of the Cold War removed major obstacles to the international deregulation of the financial markets, the greater economic, cultural educational integration that is now firmly associated with the processes of globalisation. This chapter begins by examining the impact of the 1974 general elections.

Labour returns to office

The cold weather closed in, the power cuts increased and people were asked to save energy by washing, shaving and cleaning 'their teeth in the dark' (Wasserstein, 2007, p633). Political opponents rushed out hasty manifesto's for an election date calculated not for 'electoral advantage but by the circumstances of the strike' (Kriesi & Frey, 2008, p186).

An atmosphere of fatalism surrounded the Conservative's and their 'ill-judged' campaign question (Falshaw, 2004, p50), 'Who Rules Britain - The Government or the Miners?' (Lawton, 2004, p78). Heath was gambling on the electorate's awareness of his difficulties (Wasserstein, 2007, p635). He was correct in that the Conservatives polled the most votes but they were bunched into the wrong constituencies and the Labour Party won by just four seats (Pearce, 2008, p7). Heath tried to arrange Liberal support for a minority Conservative government but was unable to meet their 'price' of electoral reform (Wasserstein, 2007, p635). Heath stepped aside and Harold Wilson found himself once again occupying number ten Downing Street, but this time he lacked an overall majority (Pearce, 2008, p7).

Some British businessmen and Conservative party members did not consider this a bad outcome. A minority Labour government would be better placed to get union cooperation but would be too weak to 'pursue extreme policies' (Frank, 1980, p115). Wilson's first act was to settle with the miners. For the second time in two years virtually all of their demands were conceded. They had achieved increased pay and overtime rates as well as a change of government. Entirely satisfied, they returned to work on Monday, March 11th, 1974 (Lawton, 2004, p88). In the same month OPEC members decided that sufficient diplomatic efforts were being made to ease tensions in the Middle East to lift the embargo on exporting oil to America. This would however, be at the same hugely increased price that Europe was already paying (Knes, 2012). Fuel costs added considerably to Wilson's problems, the country was already facing the 'most intractable economic difficulties' since the 1940's (Wasserstein, 2007, p635). The Labour Party had not expected to be returned to office so soon. They had no long-term economic plan (Wasserstein, 2007, p634) and had campaigned on a 'collection of slogans' rather than a planned manifesto (Lawton, 2004, p88).

This lack of preparation was of little consequence since it was practically impossible for a minority administration to frame major legislative change. Within months Wilson accepted the 'inevitability' of another general election and it was called for October 1974 (Burk & Stokes, 1999, p83).

This time the Labour Party were ready and they launched a robustly socialist campaign. Heath's attempts to curb trades union power had united the factions of the left. A 'strong alliance' had developed between the TUC and Labour's left wing (Kerr, 2001, p116).

Throughout 1973, the TUC and the opposition Labour Party had discussed a provisional ‘social contract’ (Tarling & Wilkinson, 1977, p395). By the time of the October election this contract had become part of their election manifesto. It committed the Labour Party to a programme of socialist measures that included the control of prices, rent, transport, housing and a redistribution of wealth. For their part, the TUC promised that wage demands would be no more than was required to stay in line with rising prices (Tarling & Wilkinson, 1977, p395). Kerr argues that the heavily socialist programme promised in the manifesto is evidence of the left having ‘seized control' (Kerr, 2001, p116). This re-run election produced a Labour victory but without a required improved mandate, they had gained a very slender majority of three seats (Wasserstein, 2007, p634). It was not the result that Wilson was hoping for (Lawton, 2004, p88). The electorate was losing faith; none of their political leaders seemed able to alleviate the economic chaos (Kerr, 2001, p115). Heath had now contested four elections and lost three of them (Pearce, 2008, p7). His party were ‘ruthless’ in opposition (Sampson, 2004, p47) and there was ‘much dissatisfaction’ with his leadership (Plowright, 2006, p140). Edward Heath would have to go (Frank, 1980, p114).

Conservative opinion makers turned their attention to Heath’s Secretary of State for Social Services, Sir Keith Joseph. As minister, Joseph had encouraged Heath to share his vision of 'modernising' Britain through the establishment of a ‘social market economy’ (Turner, 2008, p95). Initially, Heath was sympathetic to Joseph's views but the spectre of rising inflation panicked him into resorting to traditional state interventionist remedies (Turner, 2008, p96). Heath had tried to reduce unemployment by bailing out ‘lame duck’ industries; he tried to control the economy with a restrictive prices and incomes policy (Eccleshall, 1990, p207). Joseph was highly critical of Heath for refusing to consider anything other than the accepted Keynesian theories (Kerr, 2001, p115). Although Keynes had died many years before his recommendations still dominated the economic thinking of most Western governments (Ebeling, 2004, p15). In the case of an economic downturn Keynes would have the government in question borrow money so as to maintain a vigorous public sector. This would alleviate unemployment and provide spending money to ‘prime the pump’ by stimulating the market for private sector goods, thus encouraging investment in further manufacturing and employment (Ebeling, 2004, pp16-17).

Keynesian orthodoxy had evolved during the Great Depression and, although it remained a standard governmental response to financial difficulties, there were economists who questioned its effectiveness (Bowles, 2007, p27). In 1956, Milton Friedman, a University of Chicago economics professor published a lengthy critique of Keynesian theory and suggested its replacement with 'monetarism'. He proposed that when faced with an economic downturn a government should reduce its public spending and focus on inflation control while deregulating the competitive markets which could be relied upon to invest, expand and provide employment (Bowles, 2007, pp27-28). This was similar to the eighteenth century 'Adam Smith' view later identified by Lerner as a non-interventionist, economic liberalism that had been known as 'laissez-faire' (Lerner, 1937, pviii). This modern reliance upon the 'efficiency' of the market to provide its own checks and balances would become known as 'neo-liberalism' (Howard & King, 2008, p2). Treanor argues that the term 'neo-liberalism' has since been 'used interchangeably' with the term 'globalisation'; both, Treanor suggests, imply aspects of 'social and moral philosophy' as well as economics (Treanor, 2005, p1). Champions of 'monetarism' like Sir Keith Joseph, were not motivated by the creation of a philosophical movement but of a deregulated liberal free market (Howard & King, 2008, p2).

Sir Keith Joseph

Milton Friedman's treatise on monetarism appeared in 1956, the same year as Sir Keith Joseph was elected a Conservative member of Parliament (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p45). Joseph admired the work of Friedman and his colleague, Friedrich Hayek who had taught at the London School of Economics for nineteen years, before joining Friedman in Chicago (Howe, 1997, p275). Hayek, like Friedman, evangelised the works of Adam Smith; he believed that trade and profit making were 'natural' human traits (Bowles, 2007, p30) and that any official intervention was restrictive and therefore 'incompatible with individual freedom' (Eccleshall, 1990, p203).

Even during wartime Hayek spoke out against the British government's schemes for central economic planning (Rubinstein, 1994, p76) claiming that these were the methods of 'socialism and totalitarianism' (Wasserstein, 2007, p632). Hayek continued to call for less government intervention; he wanted more economic liberalism with the least possible 'market regulation and social welfare' (Wasserstein, 2007, p632).

These principles caught the attention of Keith Joseph and he became an enthusiastic advocate of the ‘anti-Keynesian creed’ (Howe, 1997, p275). His maiden speech to the Commons warned that the existing economic strategy was prone to inflation and that it would be more prudent to control the demand for money than its supply (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p95). There were many in the House who took notice. Keith Joseph, the ‘ivory tower intellectual’ had begun his climb up through the party ranks (Thompson & Thompson, 1994, p36).

The 1974 election left Edward Heath clinging to his precarious position as the leader of a party that really no longer wanted him (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p100). Sir Keith Joseph was already becoming widely accepted as Heath's most likely successor (Eccleshall, 1990, p234). In office Joseph had been a loyal minister who would occasionally ‘bombard’ Heath with economic ideas, which he knew, would ultimately be ignored (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p98). In opposition however, he became more vocal, preaching the free market and monetarist 'gospel' at every available opportunity (Eccleshall, 1990, p211). Joseph’s 'radical' economic views began to be taken seriously and slowly gained ground (Lawton, 2004, p88). He maintained that economic intervention by the government could never permanently reduce unemployment (Bowles, 2007, p27) and that it was control of inflation that must come first (Gran, 1996, p270). His words had appeared to be born out during the darkest days of the oil crisis. The industrialised world suffered a wave of inflation that was quickly followed by increased unemployment (Backhouse, 2009, p21). Milton Friedman seized upon the oil crisis as a circumstance that Keynesian economic modeling could not be expected to accommodate. Keynes could never have anticipated that the increased cost of any single commodity would so destablise national economies. Friedman maintained that a Keynesian economy would enlarge its public sector on borrowed money and then be pressured by trades unions for wages that kept pace with the increasing cost of that vital commodity.

If the government yielded to the unions it would have to increase its borrowings, the result would be a yawning balance of payments deficit, a 'wage-price spiral', and inevitably 'accelerating inflation’ (Backhouse, 2009, p21).

The rise of the free market think tanks and Margaret Thatcher

In the late 1940's, Friedrich Hayek advised wealthy entrepreneur, Anthony Fisher that the most effective way of furthering the cause of 'economic freedom' would be the creation of a 'scholarly research organisation' (Backhouse, 2009, p18). An institution with an academic pedigree so impressive that its studies could be universally accepted and applied to global economic problems (Backhouse, 2009, p18). During the following years Fisher spent time in America where he developed an interest in the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) as well as in battery chicken farming. Fisher returned to Britain and by 1955, had applied his US experience to the running of the hugely successful 'Buxted Chicken' business as well as founding and funding the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) (Spring, 1998, p125). Fisher's institute was based on the American model and unlike earlier 'think tanks', which pursued social and scientific research, both Fisher's IEA and the American FEE were specifically created to promote free market ideas (Backhouse, 2009, p18). Keith Joseph was indebted to the IEA for the assistance and expertise they provided while he was developing his own free market ideals (Turner, 2008, p95). Joseph discussed these ideals with like-minded colleagues, one of whom was Margaret Thatcher. She thought it a practical alternative to the Keynesian stance and quickly became thoroughly 'converted' (Spring, 1998, p125). Thatcher became reliant on Joseph as her political 'mentor' (Eccleshall, 1990, p212) and many of the 'key themes' that appeared in his speeches of the period would later be transformed and presented as 'Thatcherism' (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p99). During the months between the 1974 general elections Keith Joseph launched the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) (Turner, 2008, p95) and invited Margaret Thatcher to serve as vice chair (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p99). This Joseph-Thatcher enterprise was to provide a platform for the expression of 'hitherto unfashionable views' (Maclure, 1988, p153) and a powerbase for the creation of Joseph's 'enterprise culture' (Desai, 1994, p29).

Through the CPS Joseph and Thatcher were able to convince selected political colleagues of the 'folly' of state intervention (Eccleshall, 1990, p234) and of the wisdom of 'social market policies' (Turner, 2008, p95). Think tanks were to proliferate both in Britain and America; they became the primary vehicles through which the ideas of neo-liberalism, monetarism and free market 'solutions' were broadcast (Spring, 1998, p125).

Turner argues that the CPS was not strictly a think tank as the 'thinking had already been done'; it was an organisation that had been set up to 'change people's minds' (Turner, 2008, p96).

Joseph's target audience was ready for an alternative to the 'Heathite policies' which were not only not working but appeared as simply a 'bluish version' of the Labour Party's policies (Eccleshall, 1990, p204). Confidence in the orthodox Keynesian policies was being 'undermined' by the oil crisis, increasing inflation and unemployment, it was an opportune moment for the CPS to step up with its free market option (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p100). Joseph's critical assaults on Heath's apparently ineffectual policies were slowly gaining ground (Eccleshall, 1990, p234). Faced with mounting hostility Heath was obliged to call a leadership election for February 1975. Joseph, with Thatcher as his 'unofficial' campaign manager, took up the challenge (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p100). Strangely, Joseph had no 'burning ambition' to be party leader, he regarded himself as an ideas man who had been overtaken by events (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p100). Once the leadership race was announced it attracted just the kind of media attention that Joseph found uncomfortable. But the media, particularly the newspapers, found him a very interesting prospect. Keith Joseph was an 'unworldly' eccentric, who refused to own a television (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p95), a man whose friends thought he was 'lacking political antennae' (Eccleshall, 1990, p234) while others thought he was 'lacking in common sense' (Thompson & Thompson, 1994, p36).

Joseph expressed a 'genuine concern' for children living in poverty and actively supported many charities including the Child Poverty Action Group (Welshman, 2006, p4). The basis for Joseph's concern was a detached, intellectual and superior attitude that sprang from his own understanding of the 'cycle of deprivation'; (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p102) a theory of social reproduction in which child poverty and some forms of anti-social behavior were identified as 'inter-generational continuities' that occurred in poorer financial and educational backgrounds (Welshman, 2006, p2).
Given the brusque and 'insensitive manner' in which many of Joseph's speeches were delivered (Eccleshall, 1990, p234) and the repetitious nature of phrases involving the 'undeserving poor', benefit frauds, malingers and the 'unemployables' (Welshman, 2006, p4) the press sensed a source of colourful copy and began hounding him to provide it (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p100). In October 1974, their hopes were fulfilled.

During a speech to a Conservative club in Edgbaston, Joseph ill advisedly commented on the propensity of the ‘lower social categories’ to have illegitimate off spring (Hennessy, 1991, p494). He then compounded his error by advocating that such people be provided with effective contraception to avoid a dilution of the ‘human stock’ (Eccleshall, 1990, p234). The press howled in outrage, the speech was reported in terms that invoked accusations of racism, eugenics and Social Darwinism, Joseph was even accused of attempting to create a 'master race' (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p102). However inaccurate, unjust, or simply exaggerated these reports may have been, they revealed a naivety, so profound, that any hope of Joseph becoming the leader of a major political party were ‘effectively ended’ (Plowright, 2006, p290). After a month of ‘rude and hostile questions’ he explained to Thatcher that he could take no more of this ‘merciless’ public scrutiny (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p100) and would be resigning from the Conservative leadership contest (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p102). Many Conservative’s were dismayed; the need for a new leader was so urgent that they would accept ‘anyone but Heath’ (Thompson & Thompson, 1994, p36). Margaret Thatcher was quick to recognise the opportunity. With Keith Joseph and his supporters behind her she ‘stepped into the breach’ (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p102). After three months of campaigning and two rounds of voting a ‘stunned’ Heath conceded that he had lost and stepped down (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p100). Margaret Thatcher was the new Conservative Party Leader (Pearce, 2008, p7).

Thatcher opposes the Labour government

As opposition leader, Thatcher faced Harold Wilson across the dispatch box. Labour’s ‘wafer-thin’ majority allowed very little to be done about the country’s economic woes and Thatcher berated them for doing it badly (Plowright, 2006, p140). Wilson took the traditional Keynesian view of the economy, his remedies were remarkably similar to Heath’s, but were applied with increased 'vigour’ (Kerr, 2001, p116). The situation continued to deteriorate and by 1975 Britain had inflation rates approaching thirty percent, a three billion pound balance of trade deficit and over a million unemployed (Gifford, 2008, p64). Despite the social contract with the unions fifteen million working days were lost through strike action (Frank, 1980, p114). When accused of driving up inflation and not honoring their part of bargain (Frank, 1980, p116) the unions countered that the government were not implementing the promised union-friendly ‘socialist measures’ quickly enough (Tarling & Wilkinson, 1977, p411).

During his previous premiership Wilson had soured trades union relations by criticising excessive wage demands. Once again pay disputes were ‘becoming commonplace’ and again Wilson was ‘at odds with the unions’ (Falshaw, 2004, p48). His majority was so slim that his government could not impose even diluted socialist policies and this was developing into a ‘major rift’ (Kerr, 2001, p116). Sensing that the position was unwinnable, Wilson sidestepped and drew attention to Labour's election pledge to renegotiate the terms of Britain’s EEC entry. Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan, was at the forefront of negotiations (Burk & Stokes, 1999, p83) but his efforts were something of a ‘sham’ (Gifford, 2008, p61). It was widely recognised that membership conditions had already been agreed and that sweeping retrospective changes would not be allowed. However, other EEC countries allowed the pretence because they understood the need for Labour to undertake this ‘face-saving’ exercise (Gifford, 2008, p61). Several very small adjustments to the British terms of entry were eventually agreed and Wilson was pleased to announce a ‘victory for the Labour government and the British people’ (Gifford, 2008, p61). This apparently successful piece of horse-trading provided a ‘suitable distraction’ while the most ardent supporters of the left wing manifesto were quietly reassigned to less sensitive areas (Kerr, 2001, p119). By the end of 1975 the government had effectively abandoned the most contentious elements of its election agenda (Kerr, 2001, p120) and the party’s leading left-wingers had been ‘put out to pasture’ (Frank, 1980, p117). When asked for his reaction to memo’s questioning this apparently non-socialist stance Wilson claimed indifference, he had no time to read views with which he did not agree (Stone-Lee, 2005).

Wilson’s ‘major preoccupation’ was the economy. All social policies had been ‘eclipsed’ by a series of plans intended to freeze wages, protect sterling and reduce unemployment (Newton, 2010, p912). Most were ineffectual and amid rumours that Wilson was losing his ‘spark’ (Falshaw, 2004, p48) came the ‘surprise’ announcement in March 1976 that he was to resign (Lawton, 2004, p88). The Labour Party replaced Wilson as premier with the ‘avuncular’ James Callaghan (Falshaw, 2004, p48). Callaghan was known as a leftish union sympathiser who was ‘right aligned on everything else’ (Batteson, 1997, p366). He had apparently been forgiven for being the Chancellor of the Exchequer who had presided over the ‘national humiliation’ of devaluing the pound in 1967 (Wasserstein, 2007, p534).

The party Callaghan inherited was in dire need of ‘fresh initiatives’ and when he entered Downing Street as leader he was faced with a palpable sense of ‘panic’ (Batteson, 1997, p368).

Fears that Callaghan might once again devalue sterling shook creditor confidence and caused widespread selling of the pound (Newton, 2010, p912). Public sector borrowing was almost out of control and, coupled with the run on sterling, was threatening nation bankruptcy (Gifford, 2008, p64). The pound needed outside financial support and by June, Callaghan’s Cabinet had arrived ‘slowly and painfully’ at the conclusion that a significant foreign loan must be sought (Frank, 1980, p117). The German government had proposed a monetary system for the EEC; it was intended to provide the stability of the Bretton Woods agreement but would be based on the deutschmark (Gifford, 2008, p65). For Britain to become dependant on an EEC loan may have strengthened European economic ties but it would also have split the parliamentary Labour Party (Gifford, 2008, p66). Gifford states that although the EEC would have been more likely to offer generous terms to aid a British economic recovery, Callaghan chose to apply to the International Monetary Fund in the interest of maintaining ‘public and party support’ (Gifford, 2008, p66). This ‘Europhobia’ was to come at a price (Porter, 2004, p5), the IMF was very much within the American sphere of influence and monetarism was very much in the ‘ascendancy’ (Kerr, 2001, p120). The Labour government was still pursuing Keynesian economic policies similar to that of its Conservative predecessor and they were not working. Economists were beginning to agree that the usefulness of such ‘techniques had been exhausted’ (Eccleshall, 1990, p212).

The British application to the IMF was for a loan of two and a half billion pounds (Lang, 2006, p364). It was the most any country had ever requested and it revealed the government’s action as a ‘policy of despair’ (Stone-Lee, 2005). While the IMF organised the loan, political ‘interests’ on both sides of the Atlantic ‘seized’ the opportunity to make sure that ‘tight controls’ would be imposed on the Labour government (Kerr, 2001, p120). The conditions of the loan were very strict and Callaghan was forced to accept some decidedly ‘unsocialist policies’ (Lawton, 2004, p89). The main thrust of the IMF demands was intended to steer the British economy, via a monetarist route, toward ‘deflationary goals’ (Gifford, 2008, p65). Much to dismay of the Labour left, public spending was to suffer its most draconian cut since 1945 (Gifford, 2008, p65).

The impact would be felt across the range of public expenditure, from the large nationalised industries and local authorities through to public housing projects and 'school lunches' (Frank, 1980, pp117-118). At the 1976 Labour Party Conference, Callaghan spoke of current economic conditions having overtaken the accepted wisdom and that it was now no longer possible for a government to 'spend its way out of a recession' (Plowright, 2006, p42). This was as close as any ministerial representative came to a public statement of Labour's 'abandonment of Keynesianism' (Kerr, 2001, p120).

In series of statements and speeches Callaghan warned the TUC that any chance of a 'cooperative relationship' between government and the unions had been reduced to zero (Gifford, 2008, p64). The quid pro quo of the social contract required that the government vastly increase its public sector spending; this aim was totally reliant on a policy of 'radicalized Keynesianism' (Eley, 2002, p389). Callaghan's actions rendered the TUC's economic ambitions unachievable and the social contract was dissolved (Lawton, 2004, p89). Labour's austerity measures combined with revenues now flowing from North sea oil produced positive results remarkably quickly, the economy reflated, the balance of trade improved and levels of unemployment steadied (Gifford, 2008, p65). This unexpectedly effective outcome allowed the government to scale back its IMF loan and the full amount was never drawn (Falshaw, 2004, p48). Milton Friedman was jubilant, the economic theories that he championed had been successfully applied; he published an open letter to President Carter appealing for the US to follow Callaghan's lead (Frank, 1980, p118). Callaghan was more interested in political survival than in trail blazing and a by-election result had just taken the last of his initial three-seat majority. He was prepared to lead a minority administration but needed assurance that the Liberal members of the House would support him on major issues (Falshaw, 2004, p48) The resulting uneasy alliance, known as the 'Lib-Lab pact' would help Callaghan's Labour administration 'negotiate increasingly choppy industrial waters' for the next two years (Jones, 2010).

The main consequence of Callaghan's minority government accepting the conditions of the IMF loan was that it had been forced to adopt an economic policy that marked a shift away from a thirty-year tradition of Keynesian techniques (Frank, 1980, p117). The chancellor's ultimate economic aims were no longer full employment and social welfare but the control of inflation and expenditure (Falshaw, 2004, p48).

The steady but fragile recovery nurtured by this monetarist approach also encouraged a new wave of pay demands. Callaghan warned that union 'militancy' could bring down the whole Labour movement and he pleaded for pay rises to be kept below five percent (Frank, 1980, p119). With an annual inflation rate of around ten percent this was deemed 'unrealistically low' (Eley, 2002, p388) and the 1978 Trades Union Congress threw the proposal out (Lawton, 2004, p89).

Unions claimed that they were being pressured into making higher pay demands by their members, who in some cases simply bypassed union officials and made forceful requests on their account (Frank, 1980, p119). Judt argues that some union officials actually preferred these nineteenth-century style 'shop floor confrontations' because they had a better chance of winning than if they relied upon national agreements (Judt, 2005, p538). In November 1978 the British subsidiary of the Ford Motor Company ended a two-month strike by its British workers by agreeing to a pay increase of sixteen percent. In January 1979 the Transport and General Workers Union then secured a fifteen percent increase for its lorry driving members, after which a further two hundred companies broke the government's pay policy (Eley, 2002, p388). Public sector employee's did not have the leverage of privately employed workers but anyway embarked upon a long series of short but coordinated strikes.

These developed into months of 'publicly disastrous stoppages' (Eley, 2002, p388) that affected schools, hospitals, transport and the BBC (Frank, 1980, p119). Public sector workers from dustmen and gravediggers to civil servants became embroiled in national industrial action, the dead went unburied and rubbish piled up in the streets (Lang, 2006, p364; Morgan, 2000, p80). An economics journalist borrowed the phrase 'winter of discontent' from Shakespeare to describe 'those long cold months of industrial chaos' but only after Callaghan used it in a speech did it get picked up and passed into the national vocabulary by the Sun newspaper (Thomas, 2005, p84). The same publication was instrumental in an airport interview with the Prime Minister as he returned from an economic conference in the West Indies.
When asked how he intended to deal the mounting chaos, the sun-tanned Callaghan adopted a look of 'smug unconcern' and said he doubted that many people viewed the current situation as 'mounting chaos' (Wasserstein, 2007, p636). The Sun newspaper reported these comments under the headline 'Crisis? What crisis?' (Thomas, 2005, p184).

Thatcher wins the ‘Crisis’ election

Even without newspaper prompting, the electorate wanted no more of the ‘rats and the rubbish’ (Sandbrook, 2008, p36); ‘public indignation’ was building against the unions and the government’s seeming inability to control them (Wasserstein, 2007, p636). There was a growing perception that Britain was becoming ‘ungovernable’ (Weir, 1990, p8). The normally ebullient ‘Sunny Jim’ Callaghan (Jones, 2012, p256) saw his public and parliamentary support slipping away and he decided to force the issue by calling for a vote of confidence (Lang, 2006, p364). That the ballot date coincided with a pay and conditions strike by disgruntled House of Commons catering staff did not bode well; their dissatisfaction was shared by the hungry MP’s, most of whom voted against the Labour government (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p104). Having lost the confidence of the House, the Labour administration had no choice but to submit to a general election, which they called for May 3rd (Lang, 2006, p364). From the first day of the campaigning, the Tories had an opinion poll lead, because they were not seen as being responsible for the ‘winter of discontent’. The press and the public seemed so ‘set against the unions’ that Thatcher was ‘winning by default’ (Frank, 1980, p119). Callaghan’s gloomy prediction of an approaching ‘sea-change’ in British politics would prove to be both correct and understated (Page, 2002, p169).

The Conservatives won the election with a forty three-seat majority (Johnson, 1991, p740). Margaret Thatcher accepted the role of Britain's first woman Prime Minister and with it the authority to exercise her own ‘evangelical’ style of neoliberal philosophy (Gran, 1996, p269). A ‘transatlantic network’ of economic theorists and businessmen were ‘primed’ to advise in Thatcher’s ‘new approach’ (Jones, 2012, p216). Working in the ‘shadow of Milton Friedman’ (Lowe, 2005, p289) she set about assembling a Cabinet that would cooperate in making Britain an international ‘testbed’ for monetarism and its attendant neoliberal economic and social policies (Frank, 1980, p120). Alongside these economic plans rested the declared political intention of ‘rolling back the apparatus of the state’ (Lowe, 2005, p293). Thatcher’s declared intention was to increase individual freedoms while imposing ‘more authoritarian’ governmental controls on established institutions (Aas, 2007, p144). That many individuals were connected to, or otherwise involved in institutions in a way that might constitute an important element of society was of no consequence to Mrs Thatcher who famously asked ‘who is society?’ and then insisted that ‘there is no such thing’ (Wasserstein, 2007, p636).

The Cabinet agreed that reforms to the welfare state, education and nationalised industries were necessary and that nothing should be ‘sacrosanct’ (Johnson, 1991, p740). This aggressive new attitude was first experienced by a delegation of union officials who were ‘rather taken aback’ to be refused a future planning meeting on the grounds that there was nothing to discuss (Judt, 2005, p539). The trades unions had already been identified as one of the major ‘obstacles to governability’ (Ryan, 1998, p61) and Thatcher’s first move to ‘rein in’ their power was the full implementation of a much-delayed 1971 Industrial Relations Act (Blanpain et al, 2007, p360).

Education also came under scrutiny and the legislation that obliged local authorities to continue phasing out grammar schools in favour of comprehensives was abolished (Lowe, 2005, p288). Despite some reduced university funding in the wake of the 1970’s oil crisis, many higher education institutions were still enjoying the ‘post-Robbins bonanza’ (Anderson, 2006, p159). Thatcher had 'no love for universities' (Stevens, 2004, p38). She thought that they had ‘expanded too quickly’, recruited unwisely, and were now thoroughly tainted by the ‘ethos of the loony left' (Stevens, 2004, p38). It was an impression that seemed born out by the behaviour of some university students and occasionally staff who adopted political causes that discomforted the establishment and involved the staging of high profile sit-ins, walk-outs, rallies, and protests (Anderson, 2006, p163). These institutions had undertaken large publically funded expansion projects for an expected rush of students that had ‘failed to materialise’ (Murphy, 2000, p13). Robbins had wrongly anticipated that grants and inflation would rise proportionately; in the event it was only inflation that rose, making full time employment a more attractive option than full time education (Murphy, 2000, p13). Mrs Thatcher ‘despised’ the universities as she found them in 1979 (Stevens, 2004, p45). With Keith Joseph she was of the opinion that the main purpose of higher education to assist the government in achieving ‘economic stability’ (Murphy, 2000, p17).

They claimed that the Robbins ‘investment’ had failed to generate its promised economic return having instead created an ‘unmanageable’ system that was into the bargain ‘ruinously expensive’ (Murphy, 2000, pp13-17). With expanded universities housing fewer students some taxpayers became concerned that their money was doing little more than fund a much publicised ‘student revolution’ (Stevens, 2004, p45).

The alleged ‘moral flabbiness’ of the universities (Eccleshall, 1990, p205) was ‘nourished by the right-wing press’ (Anderson, 2006, p163) to the extent that it began to erode public confidence in higher education (Stevens, 2004, p45). The universities were set up to appear as ‘natural targets’ (Anderson, 2006, p163) which the Thatcher government could ‘undermine’ with impunity (Stevens, 2004, p45). The first ‘sharp effect’ was a four hundred million pound reduction in the annual support grant and the abolition of subsidised fees for overseas students. These measures were to be only a precursor of ‘further swingeing economies’ to come (Lowe, 2005, p293).

Thatcher was committed to drastic reductions in public spending and was ‘bolstered’ through the unpopularity caused by these cuts by Keith Joseph (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p105) and the enthusiastic support of the Institute for Economic Affairs, the Centre for Policy Studies and the Adam Smith Institute (Jones, 2012, p257). Although Thatcher had all the ‘anti-Keynesian’ economic advisers she could want (Wasserstein, 2007, p636), Keith Joseph was still the ‘forerunner’ (Howe, 1997, p275), the politician who had made free market ideology in Britain ‘intellectually respectable' (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p103). Joseph was appointed Secretary of State for Industry where his monetarist ideals came to the fore in a dramatic plan to divest the government of a wide range of state owned industries and local authority housing (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p103).

During this first year of the Thatcher administration, a variety of monetarist policies ‘directly influenced’ by Hayek and Friedman were ‘incrementally’ imposed (Jones, 2012, p258). Jones argues that the introduction of monetarism to the British economy as a condition of the Labour government’s IMF loan considerably eased this Conservative strategy (Jones, 2012, p262). It allowed Thatcher and Joseph to activate a neoliberal philosophy that ‘elevated free market competition above all else’ (Blanpain et al, 2007, p333). They formulated policies that would stimulate British commercial interests to look to an international potential that was being shaped by the ‘competitive pressures of globalisation’ (Zohlnhöfer, 2007, p52).
Awareness of the concept of globalisation had previously been restricted to a ‘narrow circle of intellectuals and businesspeople’ (Scholte, 1999, p28) but Scholte states that during this period it became an identifiable ‘significant trend’ that analysts began to factor into international competitive planning (Scholte, 2005, p17).

Thatcher’s second year in office

The party that had elected Margaret Thatcher their leader was largely comprised of ‘old school’ Conservatives who accepted the post-1945 view that government had a responsibility to promote ‘full employment and social equality’ (Bowles, 2007, p145). By 1980, after five years of ‘remodelling’, Thatcher had changed this philosophy to more closely coincide with her own; the traditional Conservative now appeared a distinct outsider (Anderson, 2006, p163). In the interests of democracy, ‘dissidents’ were tolerated, even within the Cabinet, but were marginialised and ‘disparagingly’ referred to as the ‘wets’ (Jones, 2012, p256). As Thatcher approached her second year as Prime Minister, the wets could afford certain smugness, her ‘far-reaching transformation' of the economy did not seem to be working (Zohlnhöfer, 2007, p51). Public spending cuts had allowed reductions in direct taxation but indirect taxes and interest rates had soared. The economy was being thrown 'into reverse', unemployment was rising and Britain’s growth rate was the lowest in Europe (Jacobs, 1998, p1520). It was an economic climate in which some sectors of society suffered genuine hardship and led to opinion polls naming Mrs Thatcher as the most unpopular British Prime Minister in the history of such polls (Plowright, 2006, p290).

Some Conservative’s were losing their nerve, the monetarist approach was apparently failing, the 'wets' appealed in vain for a return to traditional economic measures. Thatcher treated such pleas with a contempt that was observed as either 'implacable resolve' or 'mulish obstinacy' (Wasserstein, 2007, p638). She made the position clear to her detractors at the 1980 Conservative Party conference, when in an uncharacteristically playful speech she offered 'you turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning' (Judt, 2005, 541).

The beginning of 1981 saw the inauguration of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States. Promising that America would once again ‘stand tall’ in the world, Reagan would provide Thatcher with one of her most powerful allies (Grenville, 2005, p796). This ‘distinctly odd couple’ had struck up a friendship in London some years previously; they not only liked each other but also held ‘almost identical political views’ (O'Sullivan, 2008). Although different in temperament, neither Reagan nor Thatcher was overly concerned with political subtlety and both tended to ‘paint in primary colours’ (Smith, 1991, p258).

Within days of his arrival at the White House, Ronald Reagan was enthusiastically launching a neoliberal strategy formulated by a council of leading economists in which Milton Friedman played a prominent role (Jones, 2012, p265). Cautious political advisors warned the President against becoming closely associated with Friedman, monetarism and the unpopular Mrs Thatcher. The President ignored the advice and publicly endorsed Britain's monetarist plans declaring that the economic programmes of both nations would soon be 'home safe' (O'Sullivan, 2008).

In Westminster, Keith Joseph was overseeing preparations for industrial privatisation while Thatcher orchestrated the fight against inflation (Bowles, 2007, p147). Little interest was taken in achieving full employment as it was no longer seen as a 'state responsibility'; not having a job was beginning to be projected as a 'personal failing' (Bowles, 2007, p147). It was a stance that offered no hope to the long term unemployed whose ranks included almost an entire generation of 'disaffected black youth'. In April 1981 their anger was demonstrated during several days of serious street rioting (Lawton, 2004, p100). The first outbreak in Brixton, South London, was emulated in the inner city areas of 'Liverpool, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Luton and Preston' (Lawton, 2004, p100). The empire was gone and most people thought it 'best forgotten' but here were the British born offspring of 'imperial subjects' having to struggle for 'equality and recognition' (Hall & Rose, 2006, p4). The riots prompted numerous 'after empire' questions and focused attention on the 'emergence of new forms of globalisation' (Hall & Rose, 2006, p4). An inquiry reported that 'unemployment and poor housing' had sparked the violent disturbances and that 'racial disadvantage' had played a significant part (Lawton, 2004, p100). However the inquiry made no attempt to link the origins of this disadvantage and its attendant unemployment with the precarious economic climate that surrounded the government's 'monetarist experiment' (Bowles, 2007, p147).

In America, President Reagan was about to face a crisis of his own. In line with Friedman's neoliberalist theories, Reagan pushed a law through Congress that rewarded his electorate with the 'largest tax cuts in American history' (Jones, 2012, p266).
The trades union that represented America's air traffic controllers saw this largesse as an indicator of available funds and on August 3rd, took their members out on strike for better pay and conditions.

Reagan claimed that the controllers had put the public at risk by breaching their no-strike agreement and they must either return to work or lose their jobs (Jones, 2012, p266). The controllers doubted the word of the President and announced that the strike would continue. Without further hesitation in a 'truly devastating application of executive power' Reagan fired all eleven thousand of the union's members (Rollins, 2003, p403). The airline traffic controllers union was 'dissolved' (Engdahl, 2004, p183), the strike was defeated and Reagan had signaled that he would not tolerate what he considered opportunistic industrial action (Jones, 2012, p266). Thatcher and her advisors watched this skirmish play out; they admired Reagan's decisive action and 'drew comfort' from his success (Jones, 2012, p267).

Joseph moves to Education

Keith Joseph was not comfortable as Secretary of State for Industry. The office required him to negotiate 'financial lifelines' for shipbuilders, railways and motor manufacturers, the very industries that he wanted to see in private hands (Biffen, 1994). In 1981, Joseph requested that he be transferred to another ministry (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p103). Although the full extent of his eventual privatisation and deregulation programme was 'still but a political glimmer', he felt that he had completed the preliminaries (Hennessy, 1991, p495) and now sought an office that would present problems of a more 'intangible and philosophic' nature (Biffen, 1994). In September Joseph was appointed Secretary of State for Education (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p103). He 'welcomed the move', but academics viewed the prospect 'warily' (Biffen, 1994). The teaching professions had witnessed a succession of 'lack-lustre' education ministers (Batteson, 1997, p363) and were concerned at the appointment of an established political figure and 'prophet of the free market' like Joseph (Stevens, 2004, p46).

Joseph and Thatcher considered that universities 'had lost their way' (Stevens, 2004, p47). Their view was based on the belief that funds awarded to higher education were intended as an 'investment in industry' (Ryan, 1998, p15). These institutions were supposed to 'transform Britain's economy' (Anderson, 2006, p165) but they returned no substantial 'dividends' (Ryan, 1998, p15). Thatcher was confident that Joseph could make the university authorities aware of their 'economic goals' (Spring, 1998, p120).

The solution suggested by her new Minister of Education was a monetarist restructuring of the entire system, a new model that would stress ‘economic functionality and business methods’ (Anderson, 2006, p165). Joseph’s scheme was informed by data adapted by the IEA from generic business methods; no ‘knowledge or experience of educational administration’ was involved or thought necessary (Maclure, 1988, p164).

Following a government statement in which it was alleged that higher education was ‘failing the nation’ (Anderson, 2006, p166), the university authorities were given four weeks to cut their budgets by eighteen percent and to identify redundant academic posts (Stevens, 2004, p47). Joseph believed that state funds were keeping professors ‘secure in tenured positions’ to do nothing but ‘pure research' (Murphy, 2000, p21). Initially three thousand of these ‘redundant’ academic posts were identified and ‘eliminated’ (Stevens, 2004, p47). Joseph ‘invited’ government economists to find ways of trimming higher education costs still further; he wanted ‘fewer students’ and those he wanted in polytechnics rather than universities (Stevens, 2004, p48). Where previous higher education budgets had been adjusted to suit the prevailing economic climate, the cuts imposed by the Thatcher administration were driven by ‘internal, political and ideological’ motives (Anderson, 2006, p169).

An overseas diversion...

Thatcher, ‘single-minded, and impatient of criticism’ (Wasserstein, 2007, p636), continued unswervingly in her attempts to reduce the power of the state, to reduce the status of other traditional institutions and above all to reduce the country’s ‘double-digit inflation’ (Jenkins, 2013, p28). October 1981 brought a party conference that was ‘alive with dissent’. Since it was apparent that the lady ‘really would not turn’ (Hennessy, 1991, p495), the ‘wets’ began ‘openly conspiring against her’ (Jenkins, 2013, p28). Cabinet meetings, at which Thatcher routinely allowed only ‘one and a half minutes’ for each of her ministers to make their point (Wasserstein, 2007, p636), took on a dispirited air. That year’s budget had taken the ‘unheard-of action’ of increasing income taxes ‘during a recession’ (Laybourn, 2002, p216). In its wake three Cabinet members had considered resigning but were concerned that their protest would further destabilise sterling (Lloyd, 1994, p648). Thatcher was losing the support of her party and very few Conservatives believed that she could win another election (Jenkins, 2013, p28).

By 1982, Thatcher trailed badly in the opinion polls (Laybourn, 2002, p216) and was widely considered a one-term premier whose government teetered 'on the brink of collapse' (Jenkins, 2013, p28). Then came news of a diversion. One of the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic had been seized by belligerent Argentinean forces (Knight, 2010, p106). The public at large may not have been aware of this tiny residue of empire, but it had been a long-term problem for the British Foreign Office, who were not at all surprised by the 'invasion' (Jenkins, 2013, p28). The Falkland Islands had once been a valuable asset to Britain's global shipping network, providing the most southerly South Atlantic repair and coaling station as well as dominating the Cape Horn route to the Pacific Ocean (Jackson, 1922, p7). As Britain's international shipping interests declined and the empire dissolved, the now 'valueless' Falklands (Morgan, 2000, p86) had become home to around two thousand British citizens and a great many sheep (Knight, 2010, p106). British Foreign Office officials had for years been struggling to find a mutually acceptable method 'to transfer the islands to Argentina' (Welch, 1997, p483). The sticking point was always the absolute refusal of the islanders to accept Argentinean sovereignty (Welch, 1997, p484).

Tiring of this, Argentina's military Junta declared that by January 1983, the 'Malvinas' islands would be simply claimed as Argentine territory (Welch, 1997, p484). When Thatcher's military advisors pressed her to 'reinforce the islands' she chose to turn a 'deaf ear' preferring to concentrate on Britain's economic problems (Jenkins, 2013, p28). The Argentine campaign started in April 1982 when military personnel were illegally landed on the British island of South Georgia (Welch, 1997, p484). Thatcher ordered the only Royal Navy ship in the vicinity, the 'lightly armed', HMS Endurance to intercede (Welch, 1997, p485). In a second operation Argentinean forces invaded the largest of the Falkland Islands in a 'bloodless touch-an-go' raid, the object was to seize Port Stanley and then quietly leave. The Junta would use this as the basis of an appeal to the United Nations for recognition of Argentina's right to the sovereignty of these undefended and apparently abandoned islands (Welch, 1997, p486). However, before the troops had a chance to withdraw, President Leopoldo Galtieri became so 'overcome with emotion' at the adulation of the people hearing the news of the successful invasion that he cancelled the withdrawal and proclaimed that Argentina would never leave the Malvinas. 'It was a big mistake' (Welch, 1997, pp486-487).

Thatcher had also made a big mistake. She had been aware of the Junta's threat but did nothing to 'defend the islands' (Jenkins, 2013, p28). When the news of Port Stanley's capture broke, Thatcher knew that her initial lack of action could now lead to 'humiliation and possible resignation' (Jenkins, 2013, p28). The political fallout was potentially 'calamitous' (Sheridan, 2013). Thatcher's Foreign Secretary and three Foreign Office officials immediately resigned, admitting that they had failed to foresee the implications of Argentina's intentions (Johnson, 1991, p750). Thatcher bypassed all of her military advisors and met immediately with the First Sea Lord. A 'lifeline' was provided; all available naval resources would be committed to 'recapture the islands'. In just two days a task force was assembled and put to sea (Jenkins, 2013, p28). The Argentinean government were not only 'unprepared' for Britain's vigorous military response but also for a United Nations demand for a withdrawal of their troops (Norpoth, 1991, p36). Expectations of diplomatic intervention from President Ronald Reagan left the Junta equally disappointed (Welch, 1997, p488). The United States Congress opposed the war but supported their President. Through Reagan, Thatcher was able to prevent the Junta from receiving American military supplies (O'Sullivan, 2008) while ensuring that American fuel, weapons, food and even an aircraft carrier were on standby in case the task force met with difficulty (Jenkins, 2013, p28). Although diplomatic channels remained open, Galtieri's refusal to order a 'retreat from the Falklands' (Norpoth, 1991, p36), and Thatcher's certain knowledge that 'only total victory' would save her political career, meant that the chance of avoiding a military clash was very thin indeed (Jenkins, 2013, p28).

Both countries were propelled by circumstance, a 'tragi-comic war' over a handful of barren rocky islands that no longer offered any strategic or material gain (Wasserstein, 2007, p638). The situation was later described by Argentinean writer, Jorge Luis Borges as a 'fight between two bald men over a comb' (Borges, 1983). The fighting when it came was short, sharp and bloody. The Argentineans surrendered on June 14th (Laybourn, 2002, p216). Mrs Thatcher took a huge political and military gamble because she 'had no option' (Jenkins, 2013, p28). Her approval rating as Prime Minister before the Falkland's invasion was abysmal (Norpoth, 1991, p29), while afterward it was higher than it had ever been (Norpoth, 1991, p40). The conflict appears to have been 'immensely popular' with the British public who took pride in their forces triumph over 'dictatorship' (Morgan, 2000, p86).

Overseas military victory had ‘not lost its wallop’, even while the country was deep in economic recession and with unemployment figures approaching three million (Norpoth, 1991, p29). Thatcher’s Conservative administration had been snatched from disaster, she personally achieving her highest approval rating as well as ‘global celebrity’ (Jenkins, 2013, p28).

Thatcher’s second term in office

Not only was Thatcher ‘buoyed’ by this newfound status (Judt, 2005, 546) but her political policies also appeared vindicated when, at the beginning of 1983, the economy began to show signs of a ‘modest’ recovery (Carreras, 2006, p325). The closure of inefficient industries, the ‘muffling of the unions’ and increased competition was contributing to a rise in ‘business productivity and profits’ (Judt, 2005, 542). Inflation, which in the late 1970’s had risen as high as twenty one percent, had been reduced to around four percent by 1983 (Laybourn, 2002, p216). These economic improvements combined with the Falklands ‘khaki factor’ greatly strengthened the Conservative position as they approached the 1983 general election (Porter, 2004, p304). Thatcher having ‘wrapped herself in the flag’ (Jenkins, 2013, p28), campaigned as if her Conservatives had a ‘monopoly upon patriotism' (Judt, 2005, 546).

The Labour Party had become angered and divided by the advent of Thatcherism; the split had allowed their ‘increasingly leftwing’ National Executive Committee to take control of both policy and the 1983 Labour Manifesto (Laybourn, 2002, p106). They called for Britain’s withdrawal from the EEC, a return to full employment, more social benefits, the repeal of trades union controls and nuclear disarmament (Grenville, 2005, p855; Laybourn, 2002, p107). After the count the Labour Party was found to have ‘lost over three million voters’. This translated into the loss of one hundred and sixty seats and a ‘near record’ win for the Conservatives (Judt, 2005, 546).

Labour Party supporters attributed Thatcher’s victory to the ‘Falklands factor’ (Grenville, 2005, p855) although many in the Parliamentary Labour Party saw their own unguardedly leftwing manifesto as unwise and unrealistic, a virtual ‘suicide note’ (Laybourn, 2002, p104). Margaret Thatcher was indeed ‘fortunate in her enemies’ (Judt, 2005, 542).

As the Falklands ‘jingoism’ faded, the attention of the British public was returned to continuing industrial strife, ‘economic decline, and social discontent’ (Morgan, 2000, p87). The universities continued to struggle with administrative philosophies better suited to ‘industry and commerce' (Ryan, 1998, p23). Some Vice-Chancellors attempted a show of principled resistance (Anderson, 2006, p170) but stepped swiftly back into line when the government ‘threatened’ that uncooperative universities ‘would be demoted to polytechnics’ (Stevens, 2004, p53). The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals became so eager to show compliance that in April of the following year they volunteered to have their efficiency measures inspected (Walford, 1988, p55). The government agreed and set up an investigation under Sir Alexander Jarratt, a successful businessman, who had just been appointed Chancellor of the University of Birmingham (Anderson, 2006, p170). The Vice-Chancellors and Principals hoped that the exercise would show British higher education to be such good 'value for money' that no further funding cuts would be required (Walford, 1988, p55). Their optimism was to prove misplaced when all the enthusiastic cooperation was turned into ‘something of an own goal’ (Anderson, 2006, p170).

Industrial confrontation

Thatcher’s political observers and advisors kept a close eye on the National Union of Mineworkers; they had brought down the Heath government and were expected to eventually attempt to repeat the episode (Sheridan, 2013). The catalyst was to be ‘Thatcher devotee’, Ian MacGregor, who became chairman of the National Coal Board in March 1983 (Wasserstein, 2007, p637). He had moved from British Steel where his relentless drive for efficiency had increased profitability while reducing the workforce by over fifty percent (Dibblin, 1985, p110). MacGregor soon began ‘rationalising’ the coalmines, again by laying off workers and notifying unprofitable pits to prepare for closure (Dibblin, 1985, p110). The NUM, led by the ‘articulate but politically inept’ Arthur Scargill, called the colliery workers out on strike in March 1984 (Wasserstein, 2007, p637).

The NUM membership downed tools and walked out to save the threatened collieries and the communities that relied upon them. However, Plowright argues that the NUM’s ’militant leadership’ wanted nothing less than to ‘topple Mrs Thatcher’ (Plowright, 2006, p291). Times had changed; the energy industry was no longer solely dependant on coal. Power stations ran on oil or gas and some used nuclear fuel.

Those that did burn coal had amassed vast stockpiles. Regardless of how long the miners chose to remain on strike there would be no shortage of electricity (Dibblin, 1985, p108). Thatcher denounced those miners who believed that they were entitled to a well-paid job regardless of demand; it was, she said, contrary to the 'requirements of market forces' (Beynon et al, 1999, pp5-6). Her administration wanted to bring the NUM 'to its knees' and Thatcher took up the challenge as if it were an extension of the Falklands war (Dibblin, 1985, p109). Public sympathy for the NUM was eroded by Scargill's apparently undemocratic refusal to ballot his members (Plowright, 2006, p291) and by the revelation that an NUM official had made a 'foolish trip' to Libya seeking financial support from the decidely anti-British Colonel Muammar Gaddafi (Dibblin, 1985, p111).

Despite various coal board inducements and a severe NUM leadership split, the bulk of the miners refused to return to work (Dibblin, 1985, p111). Increasingly violent clashes between police and strikers at demonstrations and colliery blockades created a palpable 'atmosphere of class warfare' (Wasserstein, 2007, p637). Public opinion was divided between those who would 'see the unions humbled' at 'any price' (Weir, 1990, p8) and those who sympathised with those communities that faced a bleak future without a coal pit (Beynon et al, 1999, p6). This 'test of strength' went on for almost a year before real poverty began driving ever-greater numbers of miners back to work (Wasserstein, 2007, p637). In March 1985, the NUM 'capitulated' without gaining any agreement or even the offer of an agreement (Plowright, 2006, p291). With the strikers 'brought decisively to heel' the Coal Board was able to close unprofitable collieries and transform the remainder into 'high-yield, low-cost' production lines (Wasserstein, 2007, p637). Thatcher was satisfied with the outcome, she knew that 'breaking the miners' was an important step in the containment of the trades union movement (Dibblin, 1985, p109).

An honour withheld...

Conversely Thatcher was less happy with the outcome of a vote taken at a meeting of the Oxford University Congregation earlier that year (Hilton, 2013). Initially the Oxford University Gazette had announced that Margaret Thatcher, Oxford alumni, was to be awarded an honorary doctorate of civil law, as had all post-war Oxonian Prime Ministers (Stevens, 2004, p49). Reaction was immediate.

Two hundred and seventy five ‘furious dons’ issued a joint statement demanding that the doctorate should not be conferred on a Prime Minister whose government had such ‘done deep and systematic damage to the whole public education system’ (Young, 1989, p8). Over five thousand students signed a petition objecting to the honour and seventy percent of the university Congregation voted against the proposal (Sheridan, 2013). The honour was withheld and a statement afterward explained that awarding Mrs Thatcher the doctorate would be to ‘ignore the effects of her policies’ and would constitute a ‘bitter blow for everyone in public education’ (Hilton, 2013).

Three months later the Jarratt Committee on Higher Education published its report. If any of its readers expected the slightest echo of the views of Thomas Arnold and Cardinal Newman their hopes were soon dashed. Jarrett’s conclusions were based on the statistical interpretations and opinions of ‘management consultants’; his committee had measured the efficiency of the higher education system as it would a ‘commercial or manufacturing organisation’ (Walford, 1988, p56). Ryan argues than Jarratt was not seeking to improve, but to impose the ‘prevalent Tory style’ (Ryan, 1998, p23). Jarratt’s committee acknowledged the ‘outstanding contribution’ of the universities to the ‘quality of national life’ (Stevens, 2004, p56) before recommending that they become more 'business-like' with recognisable ‘management structures’ and chains of command (Walford, 1988, p56). Staff management, they suggested could be improved by the introduction of ‘performance indicators, staff development, appraisal and accountability’ (Walford, 1988, p56).

In late 1984 Keith Joseph announced that to trim the education budget still further he intended to disqualify university students with wealthy parents from gaining fee and maintenance grants by lowering the means test thresholds (Stevens, 2004, p50). The prospect of a government minister deliberately targeting ‘Middle England’ had Conservative backbenchers denouncing Joseph as a ‘secret socialist' (Stevens, 2004, p50).
When Thatcher, who had initially supported the proposal, learned of the outcry she withdrew immediately ‘claiming that she had not been properly briefed’ (Stevens, 2004, p51). This further undermined Joseph’s credibility within the Cabinet where many suspected that he remained only because of his ‘loyalty to Margaret’ (Stevens, 2004, p51). Thatcher herself was distracted.

Despite her post-Falklands enthusiasm for Britain's imperial past she was busily supporting her ministers in their efforts to shed Britain's last 'substantial' overseas territory (Porter, 2004, p297).

A second overseas diversion...

The British had extorted Hong Kong as a 'gift' from a militarily overmatched Chinese Emperor in 1842 (Bowles, 2007, p53). Expanding businesses soon required a larger harbour so in 1898, a ninety-nine year lease was arranged to add the adjoining 'New Territories' to Hong Kong island (Grenville, 2005, p656). This addition so greatly extended the area under British administrative control that the 1997 expiry of its lease risked leaving the relatively small Hong Kong Island economically and culturally isolated. The British Foreign Office began to explore the possibility of including Hong Kong in the arrangements for the expiration of the New Territories lease (Galikowski & Min, 1997, p3). The British government wanted to leave Hong Kong with an 'elected legislature', but any suggestion of democracy was an 'anathema to Beijing' (Grenville, 2005, p657). The 'one country, two systems' compromise was eventually reached, whereby the Chinese government would allow the 'capitalist system' to continue within the previously leased area for a period of fifty years (Galikowski & Min, 1997, p3). In December 1984, Margaret Thatcher and the Chinese Premier signed the declaration that created the Hong Kong 'Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic' (Grenville, 2005, p621). Although the British public showed little interest the event was widely reported in imperial terms, Britain's 'irreversible retreat' (Morgan, 2000, p85), or the moment at which the empire 'finally fell' (Porter, 2004, p297).

That the agreement with China came just months after the successful conclusion of the Falklands conflict contributed greatly to Mrs Thatcher's internationally 'significant' status (Sheridan, 2013). However, Smith argues that she could not have convincingly 'cut the same figure' without the friendship of Ronald Reagan (Smith, 1991, p263). The American president was 'inspired' by her prompt action to regain the Falklands; it was a response which served to remind America of its role as the world's 'leading democracy and defender of the rule of law' (Johnson, 1991, pp749-751). Despite the obvious 'disparity in power' between their two countries, Johnson states that Reagan considered Thatcher something of a 'mentor', her friendship was genuinely important to him (Johnson, 1991, p750).

Whereas Thatcher was aware that Reagan was ‘comfortable in the exercise of power’ and could only envy the apparently effortless manner in which he projected ‘his charm across a nation’ (Smith, 1991, p261). To the dismay of political subordinates on both sides of the Atlantic, the President and the Prime Minister were comfortably ensconced in a ‘mutual admiration society of two’ (Johnson, 1991, p749).

The neoliberal principles of this ‘Anglo-American’ partnership ‘spearheaded’ (Bowles, 2007, p145) a ‘reorientation of capitalism’ in which the more ‘compassionate elements’ of society were displaced by a necessity for greater profits and efficiency (Falk, 2003, p281). That prestigious leaders like Reagan and Thatcher fostered free markets as an ‘international movement’ gave credence to monetarist economic theories which appeared to be increasing the prosperity of most people ‘for most of the time’ (Smith, 1991, p259). The neoliberalist view that productivity thrives in competitive free markets unhindered by the state was beginning to pay dividends (Bowles, 2007, p146) This optimism was reinforced in January 1986 when Saudi Arabia defied OPEC, deciding to increase production and sell oil independently on the world market (Carreras, 2006, p325) Other OPEC countries followed suit, the ‘price of crude oil plummeted’ greatly benefitting the economies of Western Europe (Carreras, 2006, p325). This improving economic climate triggered Thatcher and Joseph’s long planned ‘national auction’ of publically owned utilities; water, gas, electricity, telephones as well as road, rail and air transport were prepared for privatisation (Judt, 2005, 542).

Privatisation: Joseph’s last bow

When industries that had previously been nationalised were sold to private owners they often came with inefficient or technologically outmoded processes, these were quickly jettisoned along with their associated workers. Unemployment peaked in 1986, at three point three million. Despite a variety of ‘back to work’ schemes and nineteen changes to the way that unemployment figures were calculated, it was a total that would remain the highest in Europe for the rest of Thatcher’s term in office (Jacobs, 1998, p1520). Bowles argues that the government’s dismantling of the public sector was in line with monetarist thinking and was intended to ‘restore profitability’ to all sections of the economy (Bowles, 2007, p145).

When British markets began to show signs of slow but steady economic growth, Reagan's economists advised that America's neoliberal 'experiments' could be extended (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p104). Spring argues that the theories had been proved; it was a 'triumph' for 'Hayekian economics and conservative think tanks' (Spring, 1998, p126).

Keith Joseph had every reason to be satisfied. Once considered a 'loose cannon' (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p99) he had become the government's 'policy supremo' (Biffen, 1994) and his neoliberal philosophy was slowly winning the 'soul of the Conservative Party' (Eccleshall, 1990, p213). As Secretary of State for Industry he had prepared the way for a strategic 'pruning' that would create a more 'market-oriented' public sector (Eccleshall, 1990, p215). Although he felt more comfortable as Secretary of State for Education, here his ideas were less well received. His term in office was marked by allegedly 'hare-brained schemes' such as education vouchers and students loans, he fought a long and acrimonious battle over teacher's pay and later used Jarrett's recommendations to saddle higher education with managerial methods many thought 'more appropriate to a chocolate factory' (Eccleshall, 1990, p235). The lack of Cabinet support that led to the enforced abandonment of his plan for parental contributions to university tuition fees left an 'indelible mark' (Biffen, 1994). Joseph had long suffered ill health, 'his reputation was low' and he was weary of political battling. He resigned from the Cabinet in May 1986 (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p103) and did not stand for re-election. Joseph had never promoted himself as the 'main architect' of Thatcherism but he was a 'key figure' (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p104). Together with think tank colleagues he had fostered the 'intellectual climate' that allowed Thatcherism to flourish (Rubinstein, 1994, p76).

Joseph had 'created the package' (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p92) but aware of his own 'flaws as a politician' he required Margaret Thatcher to deliver it (Eccleshall, 1990, p234). The man whose epithets ranged from the 'minister of thought' (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p95), to the 'mad monk' (Stevens, 2004, p47) and who once referred to himself as a 'convenient madman' (Denham & Garnett, 2001, p103) was gone.

The ‘Big Bang’

Joseph and Thatcher had considered the mid-nineteenth century to have been the commercial pinnacle of Britain’s international ‘entrepreneurial success’ (Eccleshall, 1990, p211). Thatcher often urged a return to the ‘self-reliance, thrift and discipline’ of that Victorian era (Eccleshall, 1990, p205). Anderson argues that Thatcher’s frequent allusions to 'Victorian values' were ‘historically shallow’ as her ‘values’ were derived from modern economic liberalism (Anderson, 2006, p164). The policies that were driving Britain’s steady economic improvement were underpinned by revenues from North Sea oil and the sale of ‘nationalised industries’ (Wasserstein, 2007, p638). A sense of growing affluence, particularly in England’s southern counties, was born out by the rise in numbers of people who not only owned their own home but also held company shares (Morgan, 2000, p89). The newly privatised utilities and industrial companies often awarded shares to employees and sold the balance through well publicised share issues. These transactions were handled by Britain’s already successful financial services sector (Morgan, 2000, p88). Free marketeers claimed that the ‘entrepreneurial zeal’ of those in the business of money management, stock-broking and merchant banking could be better used if it were not restricted by bureaucratic regulations. They wanted deregulation to release the ‘genius of the market’ (Sachs, 2012, p61).

Thatcher’s economists agreed. They advised that a deregulation of financial services would benefit the government’s privatisation programme as well as stimulating an international market for commercial finance (Clarke & Clegg, 1999, p18). Arrangements were made for the City of London’s investment bankers and stockbrokers to be ‘emancipated’ on 27th October 1986; the expectation of an immediate transaction explosion caused the event to be dubbed the 'Big Bang' (Judt, 2005, 544). It was a doubly transformative measure; as Britain's financial markets deregulated, its Stock Exchange dealers moved their business onto a ‘highly sophisticated computer-based network’ (Morgan, 2000, p88). This telecommunications breakthrough promised an unprecedented integration of the financial markets, ‘time and space collapsed’ and financial transactions could be ‘virtually instantaneous’ (Clarke & Clegg, 1999, p19). It was a ‘true economic revolution’ that would permit an expanding internationalised market without the hindrance of regulatory government controls (Carreras, 2006, p327).

London was already a leading financial centre but, after deregulation, the level of its overseas business ‘began to develop extraordinarily quickly’ (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p143). To maintain a stake in international finance, foreign governments had little choice but to follow suit and with remarkable rapidity London’s deregulation was ‘imitated by stock exchanges worldwide’ (Carreras, 2006, p325). National governments ‘abandoned’ the restrictive laws and conventions that had kept financial transactions local and unleashed the ‘liberalisation of new geographical markets’ (Clarke & Clegg, 1999, p18).

London’s foreign-exchange business soon exceeded that of New York (Wasserstein, 2007, p638). This prompted President Reagan, who wholeheartedly supported Thatcher's privatisation and deregulation strategy, to accelerate his own plans to relax the laws that prevented transference of ‘economic power from the state into private hands’ (Smith, 1991, p258). In deregulating the American financial services industry, the Reagan administration also swept away many of the safeguards imposed after the Great Depression designed to ‘curb fraud and excessive leveraging of risk’ (Sachs, 2012, p62). As had been predicted, the deregulation of the international financial sector was followed by a 'rapid expansion' of 'international trade and finance' (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p143). Large multinational corporations were transformed into even larger 'global transnational’s' in a relatively short burst of 'spontaneous economic globalization' (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p143). Clarke and Clegg state that during this period ‘financial engineering’ was recognised as an ‘important art form’ albeit a process that could facilitate ‘unprecedented financial dangers’ (Clarke & Clegg, 1999, pp18-19).

Despite criticisms that the Thatcher administration was ‘selling off the family silver’ only to add a little short-term glitter to the exchequer, the privatisation programme was doggedly continued (Hall, 2012, p16). Privatisation did generate substantial financial returns but the strategy was fundamentally ideological; the ‘wasteful, inefficient and unproductive’ public sector was being replaced by a competitive free market in which companies would have to be ‘efficient, effective and responsive’ (Walford, 1988, p49). Paradoxically, as the state shed publically owned industrial and commercial enterprises, its control of the universities became progressively tighter (Stevens, 2004, p58).

Exit the UGC

The University Grants Committee was directed to reduce further the funds awarded to those universities with the lowest number of graduates in full time employment. Out of either deference or defiance, the UGC effectively signed its own ‘death warrant’ by doing exactly the reverse. Reductions of up to forty percent were imposed on some very successful universities, while Oxbridge, with a much less ‘impressive graduate employment statistics’, escaped with only a five percent cut (Lowe, 2005, p293). At a stroke the UGC lost the support of its ‘political masters' (Anderson, 2006, p169) and the confidence of the universities (Scott, 1995, p18). The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals were sufficiently vexed with the UGC that they commissioned an inquiry into its inner workings, the findings of which were published in February 1987 (Walford, 1988, p56).

The report was mildly ‘managerial’ and recommended that the existing arrangements for block grants should remain (Stevens, 2004, p59) but that the University Grants Committee be renamed the University Grants Council and its membership adjusted to half academics and half professional managers (Walford, 1988, p56). The government dismissed the recommendations as mere ‘constitutional tinkering’ (Scott, 1995, p19); they were looking for ‘deeper changes’ as later announced in the White Paper of April 1987 (Walford, 1988, p57). The UGC would be replaced by the University Funding Council (UFC), a body that would be ‘directly accountable to ministers’ and would involve few academics (Stevens, 2004, p56). The notion of any kind of grant, block or otherwise, was to be abolished. Instead the universities would be contracted and paid by the government as suppliers of teaching and research services (Walford, 1988, p59). Each higher education institution would be treated as one of a number of suppliers and would have to compete in an ‘open market’ for students and for commercial buyers of their research services (Walford, 1988, p47).

Although the House of Lords insisted on amendments to this legislation, it still left the government in the position of a powerful buyer able to pressure its suppliers to provide ever greater quality at an ever lower price, ‘just like Marks and Spencer’ (Stevens, 2004, p59).

Thatcher's third election victory

Despite some apparently unpopular policies, Thatcher gained and retained enough support to comfortably win the general election of June 1987 (Plowright, 2006, p291). Conservative campaign managers had presented Thatcher as serious international figure, an image greatly helped by the Soviet's 'Iron Lady' sobriquet, her genuinely 'special relationship' with President Reagan (Plowright, 2006, p291) and the signing of a channel tunnel agreement with France (Morgan, 2000, p85). She was returned to Downing Street as Britain's longest-serving twentieth century Prime Minister and the only one to win three consecutive terms. She was in an 'almost unassailable position' (Laybourn, 2002, p218). The economy was improving; there was less 'anti-Europeanism' among voters as the EEC appeared to be producing 'economic benefits' (Morgan, 2000, p85). Incidents of industrial unrest were less frequent following a 'substantial decline' in both the power and the membership of trades unions (Blanpain et al, 2007, p360). Next on the 'Thatcher agenda' was the welfare state or the 'dependency culture' as her administration were encouraged to think of it (Hennessy, 1991, p496). She denigrated the system as having deprived its beneficiaries of 'individual responsibility'; a situation she claimed that could 'do nothing but harm' (Spring, 1998, p128). Hennessy argues that having 'disposed of Keynes' she was now 'determined to see off Beveridge' (Hennessy, 1991, p496). Hayek's free market ideology recommends 'eliminating the welfare state' (Spring, 1998, p122) as a method of promoting the 'individual responsibility and self-reliance' considered necessary for the establishment of an 'age of global neoliberalism' (Kurasawa, 2007, p127).

Judt argues that the privatisation of many 'publically owned industries' was a good thing. These enterprises had been protected from competition and consumer complaints, they lacked the investment to modernise and their managers were often 'hamstrung by bureaucratic inertia and political meddling' (Judt, 2005, 543). However, the combination of privatisation, the 'individualist ethic' and the improving economy caused a societal 'meltdown' by transforming citizens into either 'shareholders or stakeholders' (Judt, 2005, 543). Thatcher's policies often 'jarred' with the views of other European leaders but in international economic terms it was difficult to deny her success. By 1988 many of those leaders 'found themselves forced' to keep pace with the British and American economic recovery by adopting similar polices (Wasserstein, 2007, p640).

Most western European country's 'succumbed in some degree' to the promotion of a neoliberal free market. Only geography dictated whether this 'ascendant social philosophy' was identified as 'Thatcherism' or 'Reaganomics' (Wasserstein, 2007, p640). The commentaries on this spread of a recognised unifying economic ideology, which initially appeared in business and economic journals, created the beginnings of a 'boom in globalization literature' (Lang, 2006, 930).

Lowe states that the 'grand climax' of Thatcher's plan for education was laid out in the 1988 Education Reform Act. In its stated intention to go 'further in education than ever before', the bill introduced league tables which compelled schools to compete for the student numbers on which their funding depended (Lowe, 2005, p289). The market environment was intended to stimulate healthy competition with 'inefficient' schools becoming unpopular, then starved of funds and eventually forced to close (Davies, 1999, p5). Schools were thrown into 'institutional survival' mode by this imposition of the 'invisible hand' of market forces, a combination described by Ball as 'Adam Smith meets Walt Disney' (Ball, 1995, pp105-107). The requirement to publish academic performance results became a 'promotional opportunity' (Symes, 1998, p135) as schools vied with each other to gain the confidence of parents or proclaim their 'status' in glossy school advertising and prospectuses (Symes, 1998, p134). Symes argues that the appearance of 'Good School Guides' indicated the degree to which education became commodified (Symes, 1998, p139). School management teams and students alike found boundaries increasingly blurred by an 'uneven convergence of education, advertising and entertainment' (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1999, p300). In America particularly, large corporations recognised the advantage in sponsoring school and college programmes that built product familiarity, this generosity created research chairs associated with corporate endowments from Taco Bell, Lego, K-Mart and Yahoo (Klein, 2000, p101). In Britain universities looked to 'chief executives' for 'functionality' and 'accountability' reports while their researchers spent more time looking back over their 'shoulder than peering into the unknown' (Ryan, 1998, p5).

Winston argues that education managers were required to strive for academic excellence while improving the ranking of institutions whose status was increasingly divided into 'part church and part car dealer' (Winston, 1999, p31).

When Margaret Thatcher insistently promoted education as ‘one of the keys to national recovery’, she simultaneously evoked an imperial past where higher education ‘transmitted high culture to the future leaders of society’ (Lowe, 2005, p290). And yet, as Steven's states, Thatcher had quite deliberately set out to ‘destroy the Newman view of the university’ (Stevens, 2004, p62). Walford argues that once it had been proved that run down publically owned utilities could be revitalised by privatisation, the government applied the policy as ‘widely as possible’ (Walford, 1988, p62). However, forcing higher education institutions into an ‘industrial and commercial’ mould seriously undermined their mission to supply society with ‘responsible but not uncritical citizens’ (Walford, 1988, pp61-62). Although the polytechnics were subject to similarly ‘tight controls’, they were to some extent sheltered by their ‘track record’ for producing ‘useful’ graduates (Lowe, 2005, p293). By 1989, half the students in full time higher education were attending the already overcrowded polytechnics (Stevens, 2004, p62). Even ministers had to admit that the polytechnics provided ‘mass cultivation on the cheap’; large numbers of students were being ‘herded into ever expanding institutions to graze, untutored, on ever thinner pastures’ (Stevens, 2004, p52). Walford states that this treatment of higher education reveals no discernable benefits; academics, students, employers and taxpayers ‘all appear to lose in the end’ (Walford, 1988, p61).

The ‘energy, optimism and generous vision’ of the Robbins era had disappeared along with many traditional ‘liberal humanist principles’ (Anderson, 2006, p160). Although Thatcher’s policies were largely responsible, some considered Robbins to have played a part. His recommendations had expanded an ‘historic’ university system, which was no longer viable, at a cost which was ‘ultimately unsustainable’ (Anderson, 2006, p160). Higher education’s ‘cultural capital’ had become ‘political capital’ and was now measured only by its 'fitness for purpose' (Ryan, 1998, p5). By the end of the 1980’s, the massification of Britain’s universities had been brought within the nations economic grasp but the student experience and ultimate purpose of higher education had been ‘irreversibly transformed’ (Lowe, 2005, p293).

Ryan argues that the policy of identifying the universities with an economic, rather than cultural role has caused British society a considerable intellectual loss (Ryan, 1998, p5).

It was a loss that was the ‘ironic outcome’ of a long process that had started with minimal funding at the beginning of the twentieth century and finished with maximum state intervention at the end (Lowe, 2005, p293).

Lowe comments on the almost ‘quasi-religious’ way in which many of Thatcher’s ‘pronouncements on education’ evoked a specific set of ‘beliefs and attitudes’ (Lowe, 2005, p290). Central to those beliefs was the insistence that state schools should promote Christianity as the ‘basis of capitalism’ (Spring, 1998, p129). Thatcher maintained that Christian values were an ‘essential’ element of the free market whose very existence fulfilled a ‘responsibility to God to create wealth’ (Spring, 1998, p128). More judicious exponents of neoliberalism avoided such pronouncements, preferring the clear-cut directness of a doctrine that supported ‘entrepreneurial activity’ while being ‘radically opposed to communism’ (Harvey, 2003, p157).

Thatcher, Reagan and Gorbachev

Thatcher’s ‘strong anti-communist sentiment’ was based both on its denial of God and its obstruction to an international free market (Lowe, 2005, p290). However neither reason prevented her from liaising closely with Mikhail Gorbachev when he became the President of the Soviet Union. The British Foreign Office had informed Thatcher of his ‘potential’ as a liberalising leader in 1984, well before his ‘rise to power’. It was an association of which, she was to make ‘sustained and substantial use’ (Hennessy, 1991, p496), including the later claim to have ‘discovered’ the pliant Soviet Premier (Sheridan, 2013).

Predictions of Gorbachev’s unorthodoxy were born out by a series of ‘ideas and policies’ that were ‘glaringly’ different from those of his predecessors (Kalashnikov, 2011, p76). Gorbachev was a ‘committed communist’ and his motive was to save the Soviet system from an impending economic disaster (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p8). The USSR’s financial crisis had caused enough genuine hardship to shake the faith of the Russian people. Gorbachev was convinced that catastrophe could only be avoided by ending the ruinously expensive cold war and deregulating the wasteful Soviet planning system (Kalashnikov, 2011, p77).

This new regime sought both a more efficient and a ‘more humane’ way of running the country (Kalashnikov, 2011, p77).

Gorbachev gave economists and politicians the freedom to express their ideas, he lifted the heavy restrictions under which the Soviet media operated and foreign trade was ‘partially’ liberated by allowing a ‘select number of enterprises’ to operate outside of the USSR (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p8).

Thatcher was cautiously supportive during her Moscow visit of March 1987 (Sheridan, 2013) and no doubt offered advice on Soviet Russia’s first ever ‘local multi-candidate elections’ which were to take place three months later (Kalashnikov, 2011, p77). Gorbachev accepted Thatcher’s political input as it provided a counter to the ‘staunch anticommunist' position adopted by Ronald Reagan, who had taken office demanding a ‘much tougher stance’ be taken toward the ‘evil empire’ (Dockrill, 2007, p309). During his first term, US defence budgets were annually increased by twenty five percent, and funding was poured into ‘strategic modernisation’ that exploited the ‘profound Soviet weakness’ in highly advanced technologies (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p18). Central to these plans was the Strategic Defence Initiative, a network of heavily armed space stations equipped to detect and destroy any missile launched against America before it could reach its target (Dockrill, 2007, p309). This so called ‘Star Wars’ system tipped the balance. It forced the USSR to spend more of its ‘dwindling resources’ on the development of ‘expensive weapons’. But the Kremlin could only afford to extend its defence budget by eight percent and were forced to admit that they simply ‘could not keep up with US spending’ (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p18). This was good news for Reagan who had partly justified his military spending increase as a manoeuvre intended ‘to push the Soviet regime into bankruptcy’ (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p2).

Soviet Russia’s late 1980’s participation in arms limitation talks with America produced positive results (Lawton, 2004, p99). This was welcomed by the rest of world as any thawing of the Cold War would reduce the number of nuclear weapons held by the ‘superpowers’ (Dockrill, 2007, p309). Gorbachev understood that a reduction in ‘East–West tensions’ would alleviate many of his country’s problems (Dockrill, 2007, p310) and he wanted to extend the arms reduction talks until negotiations ended the Cold War entirely (Laybourn, 2002, p218). However, after so many years of ideological enmity, the United States of America was ‘initially sceptical’ (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p32).

Margaret Thatcher adopted a ‘commanding role’ (Sheridan, 2013) and used her ‘considerable’ influence with Reagan to assure the Americans that Gorbachev had no choice but to be sincere in his intentions (Hennessy, 1991, p496). Her argument was supported by Russia’s obvious ‘internal failures’ and from it a ‘burgeoning confidence’ began to grow between the two men (Smith, 1991, p264). International affairs were set on a ‘new and more hopeful course’. It was an achievement reached by Reagan and Thatcher through the promotion of the market economy as the ‘mark of a successful state’ and by Gorbachev’s acceptance of the ‘bankruptcy of the socialist system’ (Smith, 1991, p264). ‘The cold war was virtually over’ (Lawton, 2004, p99).

Post Cold War economic globalisation

By the end of 1989, the world was simply a ‘different place’ (Beabout, 2000, p267). In January, Ronald Reagan's term as US President finished, his last official act was to express ‘thanks and appreciation’ to Britain’s Prime Minister (O'Sullivan, 2008). George W. Bush moved into the White House thoroughly appraised of the usefulness of Mikhail Gorbachev, America’s ‘trusted friend in the Kremlin’ (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p32). For Gorbachev, however, such credibility came at a price. Determined to produce internationally acceptable foreign policies, he had made some ‘fateful decisions’. One miscalculation involved a near democratic election for delegates in a new Congress of People’s Deputies. This went awry when communist candidates failed to win enough seats to control the assembly (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p9). The Deputies in question represented the individual ‘soviets’ from which the USSR was constructed and, as non-communists were elected, so those ‘republics were transformed and democratized’ (Kalashnikov, 2011, p77). Gorbachev ‘refused to interfere’; he would not jeopardise plans for Russian economic stability, although those plans were driving the established political system into ‘terminal decline’ (Kalashnikov, 2011, p77).

The USSR’s political weakness rendered it incapable of maintaining control over its numerous republics, protectorates and satellite states (Dockrill, 2007, p310). On November 9th 1989, East Berlin’s Communist Party declared that following an alteration in its ‘relations with the West’ security personnel at border checkpoints would be withdrawn (Rosenberg, 2010). Jubilant crowds made their way to the Berlin Wall, which for twenty-eight years had divided the city, and began to tear it down (Nayak, 2009, p158).

Within weeks other countries of Soviet Eastern Europe were breaking away from their communist overlords (Carreras, 2006, p325). Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were the first to demand independence (Kalashnikov, 2011, p77), then Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania announced plans for democratic elections (Lawton, 2004, p98). The USSR leadership presented no objections, any attempt to crush these 'democratic' uprisings would have jeopardised the 'desperately needed' one hundred billion dollar loan promised by 'foreign governments' (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p28); Gorbachev had no choice but to let the East European communist countries exit 'peacefully' (Stoner-Weiss & McFaul, 2009, p28). Russia's newly liberated media provided the population with their first opportunity to compare the 'inadequacies of the Soviet system' with an apparently affluent capitalist West (Kalashnikov, 2011, p75). Combined with Gorbachev's policies of 'perestroika and glasnost', this knowledge seriously undermined the faith of the people in Marxist-Leninist principles (Lawton, 2004, p98). The communist system collapsed, it had 'disintegrated from within' (Dockrill, 2007, p310).

The deep divisions of a 'bipolar structure' were disappearing (Dockrill, 2007, p310), and economic globalisation, which had 'continuously expanded' throughout the industrialised West, arose to bind the world together. For the neoliberal business community it was a long awaited but expected outcome, they had always believed that the Soviet system would inevitably fail and that 'capitalism and democracy' would prevail (Dockrill, 2007, p302). Triumphalists declared that the West had 'won the battle against communism' and revelled in the general air of the 'end of history' (Kolthari, 1995, p1593). The Soviet Union fragmented into 'successor states' whose 'rapidly constituted business elites' rushed to embrace the ideology of neoliberalism (Falk, 2003, p281). Free market capitalism was 'in the ascendant' (Nayak, 2009, p158) because its neoliberal projects were financially supported by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Spring, 1998, p127). The globalising policies of Reagan and Thatcher appeared as a 'genuine revolution in political thinking'; inexperienced politicians welcomed the option of concentrating on social policy while their newly deregulated economies were left to look after themselves (Armstrong, 1998, p467). The 'neoliberal doctrine' of Hayek and Friedman came highly recommended; it had first shaped Anglo-American economic planning, then made a 'victorious march' through Europe and was now influencing much of the world (Harvey, 2003, p158).

The communist leaders of North Korea and Cuba remained unconvinced, even when their larger political partner, China, began making tentative moves toward a market economy (Beabout, 2000, p263). Most of the world's industrialised countries were convinced by the Western economists of the benefits of an enterprising, competitive and ultimately self-regulating free market. Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' was touted as the international 'manifesto for free marketeers' (Eckes, 2007, p408).

Reagan and Thatcher had shifted the economic focus of the industrialised world 'from national Keynesianism to neoliberal globalisation' (Mittelman, 2003, p49). Its international progress being hugely accelerated by those political leaders who willingly accepted, and promoted, globalisation as 'unquestioned commonsense' (Scholte, 2005, p39). Countries whose deregulated markets were open to foreign investment, trade and technology were shown to have achieved greater economic growth than countries with 'closed economies' (Coatsworth, 2004, p51). Such examples were offered as evidence that national economies operated more efficiently when released from 'excessive governmental constraints' (Beabout, 2000, p267). The notion that this was the entry point for a new, and 'contemporary phase' of globalisation (Stearns, 2010, p154) was internationally endorsed by those within 'business, media and academic circles' (Scholte, 2005, p39).

America's universal culture

Along with their promotion of the globalised free market, the Reagan and Thatcher administrations 'aggressively pushed' for the worldwide use of the English language (Mirrlees, 2006, p202). Its acceptance as a common second language was believed to be a 'major factor' in the further expansion of globalisation (Stearns, 2010, p133). This 'linguistic imperialism' was underwritten by neoliberal think tanks who promoted the view that 'finance, the military, culture, and education' could all be more internationally integrated if their business were conducted in English (Phillipson, 2009, p337). That English had long been a first choice second language made potential students aware of the 'compelling advantage' in learning the same second language as everyone else (Legrain, 2003a). The 'globalization of science' created another inducement; many international conferences and journals use the English language, most computer manuals are only available in English and over eighty percent of all electronically stored data is in English (Stearns, 2010, p135).

The ‘combined global power’ of Britain’s nineteenth century and America’s late twentieth century hegemonic control created a legacy in which English was the ‘world language’ (Spring, 1998, p121). Despite this duel heritage many definitions of globalisation classify the English language as an ‘American export’ (Legrain, 2003a). Marling argues that this simply reflects the ‘worldwide reach’ of US commercial and business activity but acknowledges that it could be misconstrued as ‘nefarious Americanization’ (Marling, 2006, pvii).

This was not a novel observation. W. T. Stead in his 1902 publication ‘The Americanization of the world’ wrote of the disapproval expressed by ‘irate champions of England’ for the mere suggestion of such an ‘anti-patriotic’ idea (Stead, 1902, pp1-3). Even as Stead was being admonished, one American ‘cultural product’ was posed to become ‘uniquely dominant’ (Legrain, 2003a). The First World War brought the European film industry to a ‘standstill’ (Sinyard, 2002, p130), but it proved to be the ‘best thing that could have happened’ for the American ‘movie’ (Marling, 2006, p21). Hollywood, a Californian orange grove recently colonised by film production companies was ready to supply the demand. By 1918 American filmmakers had consolidated international markets and established a ‘global stranglehold’ that they have ‘never since relinquished’ (Sinyard, 2002, p131).

After 1927, sound films not only brought ‘American English’ into ‘universal use’ (Marling, 2006, p21) but also proved useful in introducing immigrants to the ‘dress, speech and attitudes’ of their adopted country (Johnson, 1991, p224). Exported American films played a similar role in the post-World War Two Marshall Plan. European cinema audiences were treated to a variety of commercial feature and propaganda films which illustrated an ‘Americanised vision of their future’ (Ellwood, 1998, p33). ‘Operation Bambi’ presented the same material in simpler form, largely for children but also for ‘semi-literate or illiterate adults’ (Ellwood, 1998, p36). The message was loud, clear and sometimes in colour, here was a ‘new civilisation of opulence and growth’ (Ellwood, 1998, p41). Although ‘basically entertainment’ when cinema reaches a large receptive audience it becomes a powerful medium for the dissemination of ideas and beliefs, the mainstream Hollywood product has long been a conduit for American ‘language and culture’ (Marling, 2006, p19).

A desirable ‘global image’ was considered such a political advantage that exporting Hollywood studios often received ‘strong backing’ from the US government when it came to breaching troublesome ‘cultural barriers’ (Eckes, 2007, p412). This international ‘showcase’ for the American way of life created a vast overseas market for what have become ‘globally shared consumer items’, these must include Coca Cola, denim jeans, baseball caps, MacDonald’s style fast food restaurants, CNN and Disney theme parks (Stearns, 2010, p151). While the ideals of globalisation were largely propagated by politicians, economists and ‘global cooperation institutions’ such as the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank (Mittelman, 2003, p49) Aas argues that the genuine popularity of American consumerism should not be disregarded (Aas, 2007, p5), some people spend their time and money ‘guzzling hamburgers and Coke’ simply because they enjoy them (Legrain, 2003a). Such tastes may have originally been ‘inspired and encouraged’ by American marketing but have since become assimilated; imported cultural or commercial ideas are more readily accepted when subject to transformation through the processes of ‘local cooperation and adaptation’ (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p149).

The notion of a ‘universal civilisation modelled on the American free market’ (Gifford, 2008, p86) was largely a development of the neoliberal theories promoted by the 'Austrian school of economic thought’ (Harris, 1997, p442). The free market philosophy of these Viennese economists coincided so closely with that of the ‘prestigious’ Rockefeller Foundation that in 1924, generous terms were offered for them to study in America (Hülsmann, 2007, p453). Friedrich von Hayek, possibly the group’s leading political thinker, became a professor at both the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics (Beveridge, 1949, p48). Together with Milton Friedman, Hayek mentored the ‘Chicago school’ of economists (Wasserstein, 2007, p632) whose ideology greatly impressed Sir Keith Joseph (Howe, 1997, p275). The political influence that Joseph gained through his development of transatlantic economic think tanks (Spring, 1998, p125) did much to create the ‘intellectual climate’ in which his protégée, Margaret Thatcher, could promote a neo-liberal, free market philosophy and a monetarist economy (Rubinstein, 1994, p76). Thatcher’s friendship with Reagan and her support for his neoliberal policies created an ‘Anglo-American nationalism’ (Gifford, 2008, p86) that facilitated the international acceptance of ‘global neoliberalism’ (Kurasawa, 2007, p127).

This has greatly accelerated the globalisation process. However, the economic benefits, or otherwise, of the blurred territorial borders and confused cultural identities of a more integrated world remain deeply contested (Scholte, 2005, p46). The number of economic, sociological and political investigations into this phenomenon has 'skyrocketed' and continuing contemporary observation ensures that globalisation will remain the 'leitmotif of our age' (Lang, 2006, 930).

This chapter has examined the promotion of a neoliberal ideology by Britain's political leaders. It affected most aspects of society but here I have stressed the impact on higher education. The prevailing government view was to reduce their responsibility for public services while increasing their control of the universities. To this end the UGC was abolished, funding was moved onto a commercial basis, and more accountable management systems were imposed on the institutions themselves.

Mrs Thatcher and America's President Reagan promoted international neoliberalism with almost religious zeal. I have described how the two leaders employed their collective economic and political power to weaken the ideological foundations of the Soviet Empire to the extent that it hastened its eventual collapse. The end of the Cold War provided a powerful endorsement of the benefits of neoliberalist free trade and many the world's governments were swayed. International financial markets were deregulated and economic, cultural and educational integration was accelerated. The ever-present process of globalisation had moved into its modern phase.

Conclusion

My thesis has traced a route through two hundred years of British, international and higher education history, melding the cultural influence of the universities together with the global advance of neoliberalism. I have drawn these events together with the contemporary experience of higher education being moved closer to a market model by the requirement to engage in competitive funding and corporatisation via a more managerial ideology. These developments were universal but my main focus has been to juxtapose English higher education with a range of selected historical markers. I started with the 'Rights of Man' and the Napoleonic war. These events are relevant to the thesis because they created the political circumstances under which German research-based universities flourished.

This is important to my argument because it was a model that was emulated by two new London universities, which sprang from the age of optimism and economic expansion that followed Britain's mid nineteenth century declaration of free trade.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 epitomised this imperial confidence and my thesis describes how it promoted British ingenuity and all that was admirable and profitable about the expansion of the British Empire. I argue that this led to opportunities for Oxbridge graduates in the colonial civil service, who then assisted in the spread of English culture by presenting themselves to the world as the Christian gentleman envisaged by Arnold and Newman.

Higher education opportunities at home also have a bearing on my thesis because by the start of the twentieth century many regional technical colleges succeeded in becoming chartered universities, which, along with the London School of Economics became the core of a national system.

Further progress in education, in society at large and of continuing global integration were dashed in 1914. I have related the circumstances of Britain's entry into the conflict that would become the First World War. The relevance to my thesis is in the blasé treatment meted out to institutions of higher education in the early days of the conflict. Universities that were initially afforded no special consideration did become more important with the rising wartime requirement for skilled administrators and researchers. This newfound respect for higher education was to last through to Germany's surrender of 1918. Postwar ambitions for a League of Nations, an international forum of adjudication to prevent further conflict, was significantly diminished by the refusal of the US congress to join. This is relevant to my thesis because it signaled America's return to isolationism; this allowed Britain to adopt a proxy hegemony that reinstated imperial career opportunities for university graduates. The demand by postwar students for university places so severely stretched available finances that the government had to support the system with a funding scheme that was managed by the University Grants Committee.

The 1920's were dominated by social unrest and turbulent economics and I have described how this culminated in America's 1929 Wall Street crash and the worldwide economic depression of the 1930's.

British state aid for universities was reduced, and for the first time these institutions had to consider strategies for attracting overseas students. The University of London worked hard to achieve an international standing as a producer of research graduates while the civic universities became known for the commercial applications of their scientific research.

Economic instability made international politics increasingly volatile and my thesis has explored how this led Italy, Germany and Spain to fall under the influence of charismatic nationalistic leaders. By 1939 personal and political ambition had driven the German and Italian leadership to the seizure of foreign sovereign territories. This breach of League of Nations directives caused international fury and compelled Britain and France to declare war. These events are included in my argument because immediately after this outbreak of war the treatment of institutions of higher education was quite different. They were regarded as sources of expertise and were called upon to provide innovative methods of defence and attack as well as the development of advanced technologies such as code breaking computers and radar. In late 1942 the tone of the conflict was radically altered after Japan attacked an America's navel base at Pearl Harbour. The United States applied its massive industrial capability toward the production of war materials and its diplomatic and political strength to the planning of a postwar world. A series of international agreements including the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations Organisation and the Bretton Woods accords ensured that any increased integration of postwar economics, trade and culture would be American led. These, I argue, would become the building blocks of the modern phase of globalisation.

Britain's own postwar aims included the creation of a universal welfare system, better housing and a planned expansion of the higher education system. However, in common with other European countries, the burden of Britain's war debts was so vast that such ambitions had to rely on a series of American loans. I have examined the circumstances under which this introduced Europe to many of the facets of American life in a process, that by the late 50's, would be for the first time be described by the word 'globalisation'.

In 1947 India gained its independence and was the forerunner of Britain's withdrawal from many of its colonies and protectorates. The British Empire was, during this period, slowly being dismantled.

I have explored how this reduced the need for colonial officers and civil servants and limited the overseas influence previously enjoyed by English higher education. This turns the focus of my thesis toward higher education at home and an expansion that had been driven by student demand rather than foreword planning. A study published in 1963 recommended that university expansion was a requirement of international economic survival and that it should continue at public expense. The government agreed, although it was a large financial commitment, and shortly afterward the world once again entered into economic turmoil. The American economy became so destabilised that the US dollar could no longer underwrite the Bretton Woods agreements and the system had to be abandoned. The significant role played by London's financial institutions in the resulting world currency market was largely thanks to Britain's 1973 entry into the European Economic Community. This was not a universally popular development and a later government so feared political repercussions that a much-needed loan was sought not from the EEC, but from the IMF. This has a bearing on my thesis because the conditions the loan introduced elements of monetarism to the British economy. Once this ideology was accepted into the system it helped to clear the way for a neoliberal monetarist administration that would actively endorse the principles of free trade and globalisation.

I have explored aspects of Margaret Thatcher's Premiership and how her ideological partnership with America's President Reagan allowed neoliberal monetarist theories to be applied to national economies. This led to a change in the British government's view of its responsibility to the public sector and much of it was privatised. The investment of public funds in Britain's system of higher education was made on the understanding that it would return dividends. The government replaced the UGC with ministerial control and obliged universities to accept almost industrial management techniques. A university education became a measurable and purchasable service for which institutions would have to compete with against each other for 'customers'.

My thesis closes with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. The collapse of Soviet Russia, already considerably weakened, was hastened by Anglo-American economic and political pressure. This was a monumental development and many world governments accepted it as an example of the superiority of neoliberalist thinking and the benefits of free trade.

It was an ideology that advocated the international deregulation of the financial markets, and the greater economic, cultural educational integration that is now firmly associated with the processes of globalisation.

Neoliberal theorists such as Hayek and Friedman had advocated this philosophy since the 1930's. They promoted social policies that encouraged greater 'individual responsibility and self-reliance' so as to reduce governmental responsibility for public services and welfare spending (Kurasawa, 2007, p127). Politicians with neoliberal ambitions sought to rid the state of publicly owned utilities while imposing an 'entrepreneurial logic' on the remaining public institutions 'such as universities' (Harvey, 2003, p159).

These policies were justified by the notion that free market suppliers would be obliged to compete for business by providing better value for money. Eckes argues that the idea has 'deep roots' which can be traced back to ancient traders (Eckes, 2007, p410). Hayek states that archaeological evidence supports the existence of the 'seeds of free trade' even in the 'dimmest past' (Hayek, 1992, p39). Ancient peoples lacked the geographic knowledge for global ambition but some well-motivated groups did create empires so powerful as to consider themselves masters of the 'inhabited world' (Campbell, 2007, p287). Hardt and Negri argue that those who claim globalisation to be a recent phenomenon have 'misunderstood its history' (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p125). The integration and homogenisation of ancient trading cultures has become recognised as the 'complicated process' of globalisation (Jennings, 2011, p7). Macgillivray argues that for an event to be identified as 'globalising' it must have either 'global intent' or be the cause of significant global repercussions (Macgillivray, 2006, p26). Such events have 'ebbed and flowed' through the world's history of giving the impression of waves or phases of globalisation (Das, 2009, p7).

Early phases involved the great 'transcontinental trade routes' that crossed mountains and desert (Jennings, 2011, p7). A 'discovery' phase emerged when Europe's fourteenth century maritime fleets started trading along Africa's Northern and Western coasts (Coatsworth, 2004, p40). In 1492 Columbus broadened the commercial horizon by demonstrating the feasibility of trans-Atlantic trade.

Just six years later, Vasco da Gama shortened the Indian spice route by sailing around the Cape of Good Hope (Macgillivray, 2006, p49). Such 'exhausting, and hazardous' feats of maritime skill and commercial opportunism (Eckes, 2007, p410) imbued the 'European consciousness' with a 'global world-view' (Macgillivray, 2006, p49). It was a view that nurtured ambition and a century later the maritime supremacy of Spain and Portugal began to fade and the British 'imperial imitators' stepped firmly into the breach (Ferguson, 2003, pxxv). After taking 'nominal possession' of Newfoundland in 1583 (Morris, 1979, p42) the British began rather hesitantly taking responsibility for 'half the world' in what appeared 'a fit of absence of mind' (Seeley, 1914, p8). Britain's American empire reached from Newfoundland to Carolina and included several large islands such as Bermuda and Jamaica (Armitage, 2000, p174). By the time the thirteen American colonies were ready to fight for their independence, Britain's 'liberal education policy' had provided the population of two and a half million with a total of nine universities (Chanda, 2007, p194).

European universities were already highly regarded and each had their own 'deep historical roots' (Altbach, 2004, p4). Complex societies required a systematic form of education to preserve and transmit accumulated knowledge, and the earliest European universities were religious foundations modelled after Islamic madrasas (Goody, 2006, p129). Of the eighty-five existent European institutions founded before the sixteenth century, seventy are universities (Altbach, 2004, p4). Glasgow's ancient university boasts a faculty that once included Professor Adam Smith. He spent almost ten years writing 'An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations' which was published in 1776 (Delong, 1997; Faber, 2006). Smith's book was not only a 'systematic, coherent framework' for the study of economics and trade (Legrain, 2003, p87) but also an 'attack on mercantilism' (Irwin, 1996, p10). He decried monopolies like the East India Company and was critical of the treatment of American colonial settlers by the British government (Pitts, 2005, p52). Smith maintained that the settlers should either be completely free or completely integrated, but he understood that neither was politically acceptable (Pitts, 2005, p54) and warned that no colonial power 'ever voluntarily gave up the dominion of any province' however 'troublesome' (Smith, 1937, p582). At the time of publication such sentiments were a little out of step as 1776 was also the year of the American settlers revolt.

America's War of Independence, the French Revolution and its associated Napoleonic War coincided with Britain's Industrial Revolution. It was this combination of international political and commercial upheaval that 'ushered in the modern world' (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p57). It was followed by a hundred years of 'relative peace' in which Europe and America developed advances in 'political and technological' thinking that would transform society and accelerate the 'pace of change' (Eckes, 2007, p410).

A 'growing appreciation' of the principles of Smith and his followers came with the dawn of the nineteenth century; examples of comparative advantage were particularly persuasive and diverted official thinking from the 'mercantilist approach of the past' (Das, 2009, p6). The giant monopolies of which Smith had been critical were slowly replaced by 'intensely competing firms', both trade and the variety of traded commodities expanded dramatically (Das, 2009, p7). Increased shipping and more liberal trade laws not only ensured that 'globalisation gathered considerable momentum' (Magee & Thompson, 2010, p62) but also that it became more 'economically meaningful' (O'Rourke & Williamson, 2004, p109). After the abolition of the Corn Law in 1846 the British government declared unilateral free trade and the 'forces of capitalism' were 'unleashed' (Das, 2009, p6).

The Great Exhibition of 1851, made an impressive show of the globalising power of railways, steamships, the electric telegraph (Legrain, 2003, p89). These feats of engineering and technology 'dramatically accelerated international transportation and communications' (Eckes, 2007, p410) and allowed the exhibition to present the rest of the world's business revolving in a 'British-centred economic orbit' (Auerbach 2008, pxi). In 1851 almost all of the one hundred awards for manufacturing excellence went to British companies; at the Paris Exhibition of 1867 Britons garnered just ten, the 'industrial sceptre was slipping' (Ryan, 1998, p14). Ironically as British industrial supremacy lapsed into gradual decline, nineteenth century globalisation was reaching a 'crescendo' (Das, 2009, p7). British imperial networks criss-crossed the world 'benevolently' bestowing 'Anglobalization' (Magee & Thompson, 2010, p62) on regions, countries and continents, globalising the planet in a system that was to become the closest, to date, to a 'world government' (Ferguson, 2003, pxxvi).

As advances in transport and communications technology physically accelerated global travel and interactions they had the apparent effect of compressing time and space (Scheuerman, 2008, p43). The British Empire inaugurated many such earth shrinking technologies, gaining global convergence on commodity prices and even managing to 'diminish' the distance between divergent 'national' economies and thereby creating its own 'borderless world' (Magee & Thompson, 2010, p63). The twentieth century ushered in a 'complicated' new phase of globalisation, the 'epoch of the European empires' (Hall & Rose, 2006, p12). Britain's maritime supremacy could not prevent 'inspired competitors' from colonially controlling large tracts of land (Amin & Luckin, 1996, p234). The French, Belgian and the German governments all sought opportunities for overseas territorial expansion (Schmitt, 1918, p3). Britain had long been wary of Germany's commercial and military development but the addition of these expansionist ambitions elevated the Kaiser to 'primary threat' (Thompson, 2000, p18). German newspapers responded by frequently reminding readers of the 'English danger' (Schmitt, 1918, p1). Germans were told that for a century Britain had stood 'aloof from Continental politics', preferring to deal instead with colonial possessions in India, Africa, Egypt and Burma — but now it was time for Germany to acquire 'a place in the sun' (Schmitt, 1918, p5). As 'great power rivalries' began to build up (Anderson, 2006, p66) the countries of Europe split into two major factions, each with its own 'tangle' of military and defence alliances (O'Farrell, 2007, p367). The situation became so precipitous that it only required 'one stray firework' to fall into the box and the whole of Europe caught fire (O'Farrell, 2007, p367).

The First World War saw the ruin of the British economy and the emergence of America as financial world leader (Allen, 1954, p743). The determinedly isolationist American stance allowed the British to continue as if economically unaffected (Molle, 2003, p22). The territorial spoils of war had extended the British Empire beyond all previous boundaries and further bolstered the illusion of Britain's continuing imperial status (Walworth, 1986, p1). English higher education maintained its high level of international influence with the founding institutions around the world that were modelled on the British university (Collini, 2003, p5). Given that they had a public image to nurture, Oxford and Cambridge universities began to cooperate for the specific purpose of developing the 'Oxbridge ideal' (Halsey, 1992, p70).

A ‘sense of place’ was created by their projection of themselves that combined patriotism, pride in empire and a respect for the past (Harrison, 1994, p81). It was an image endorsed by popular authors such as Waugh and Betjeman (Anderson, 2006, p120). Public awareness was raised through the promotion inter-university sporting contests; rugby, cricket the Boat Race succeeded in becoming ‘events of national interest’ (Barnard, 1961, p125; Roberts, 1947, p33).

When not promoting sporting entertainment the perceived role of the Oxbridge universities was to blend the ‘old aristocracy’ into the far more numerous upper middle class (Callinicos, 2006, p24) to produce graduates with enough drive to maintain the ‘old professions’ or sufficient ‘sense of superiority to run the British Empire’ (Mackney, 2006, p4). The late nineteenth century civic universities of industrial cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool were founded by ‘local initiatives’ to meet ‘local needs’ (Collini, 2003, p4). Their perceived role was to produce graduates with the training and skill to manage modern industrial processes or to teach in the ‘expanding education system’ (Callinicos, 2006, p24). Although the civic universities were initially intended as an alternative to Oxbridge they soon felt compelled to combat an aura of ‘second best’ by imitating the ‘curriculum and academic style’ of the ‘elite institutions’ (Barnes, 1996, p271). This often included the provision of student accommodation in an effort to become all-residential institutions (Barnes, 1996, p281). Halsey states that this ‘shift in scope’ was hardly surprising as the provincial universities would have been as susceptible to the status of the Oxbridge model as were their overseas counterparts (Halsey, 1992, p71).

After the Second World War international trade was revived under the regulations of the Bretton Woods institutions. The Marshall Plan was set up to help Europe’s shattered economies return to the 'world market' (Waters, 2001, p105) and with it came an array of transatlantic cultural influences (Marling, 2006, p23). Globalisation was gathering the impetus to exceed its 1914 limits and the values and lifestyles that it promoted became, and have remained American (Ellwood, 2002, p18). Britain was 'especially open to American cultural imports' as the two countries share both a language as well as a similar ‘consumerist and individualist’ outlook (Martell, 2008, p462). The 'globalization of American culture' was fuelled by the United States ability to mass-produce the materials required for 'mass consumption’ (Martell, 2008, p462).

Such 'technological advantages' when combined with 'military might' and the economic levers of the Bretton Woods institutions made the United States the undisputed global hegemon (Waters, 2001, p105).

International trade put cash-rich America in a position to advance near bankrupt Britain a loan of almost four billion dollars (Barnett, 2011, p2). The stipulations attached all related to the empire, which had long been a 'thorn in the flesh' of American politicians (Clarke, 2008, p379). Britain was told that it must address the question of Indian self-determination as well as opening its other colonies and dominions to 'multilateral free trade' (Clarke, 2008, p380). The British did not object. The enormously expensive 'imperial heritage' no longer offered an 'economic or strategic advantage' (Judt, 2005, 293) and most on the government benches considered 'that the game was up' (Clarke, 2008, p365). 1947 saw independence for India and Pakistan, and for Burma and Ceylon in the following year. The sprawling empire which English university graduates had administered under 'the banner of Arnold and Newman' was being dissolved (Barnett, 1987, p225). The character of the Indian subcontinent, the British Empire's greatest 'economic and military' asset (Darwin, 2009, p650) and the rest of the South Asian region was changed forever as a procession of 'colonial residents and administrators' beat an 'orderly' retreat to the English shires (Judt, 2005, 293).

Britain's concerns were now for its own future and the newly inaugurated welfare state; a better educated workforce would not only generate the revenue for 'cradle to the grave' security but would also fulfil the expectations of a more egalitarian society (Field, 2011, p2). A series of authoritative inquiries recommended that higher education should become a more accessible educational experience (Walklaad, 1964, p389). The Robbins committee cleared away the last of the barriers to mass higher education by recommending huge government subsidies to cover all of the costs of qualifying students (Pratt, 1992, p32). Consequently student numbers rose as fast as the cost of educating them. Britain was once again living beyond its means (Pimlott, 2000, p34) and the generosity of the financial support agreed after the Robbins Report was regretted (Gifford, 2008, p65).

The Keynesian view that public money should be spent to reflate the economy was in question (Bowles, 2007, p27). Neo-liberal politicians advocated a 'monetarist' approach; they wanted a self-supporting, free and unregulated market, which made fewer demands on the public purse (Bowles, 2007, pp27-28).

Neoliberal governments in Britain and American promoted their free market policy so successfully that 'centre-left parties' of other countries began to adopt neoliberal programmes (Howard & King, 2008, p6).

In the mid 1980's came the news that even the Soviet Union planned to opt for a 'market-based economic approach' as well as a 'more open political style' (Stearns, 2010, p133). Nationalist movements in Soviet satellite states took the Russian leaders at their word and seized the opportunity for open dissent. European communism collapsed throughout 1989–91, numerous newly independent countries became potential participants of the expanding world market (Stearns, 2010, p133). Stearns argues that changes in political thinking, more integrated economies, advancing technology and the homogenising of culture represented a unique and 'largely voluntary embrace' of globalisation (Stearns, 2010, p154). Neoliberalist policies have integrated all major international economic and trading markets; Anderson states that with no 'significant opposition', neoliberalism has become 'the most successful ideology in world history' (Anderson, 2000, p13). This 'heightened integration' of world cultures and economies has been facilitated by a faith in international financial organisations that 'bundles neoliberalism and globalization' together (Mittelman, 2003, pp48-49).

Throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the terms 'England, Britain and British Empire were near-synonymous', politics, commercial advertising, magazine and newspaper items all served as reminders of the prosperity that was owed to an 'international sea-borne empire' (Judt, 2005, 279). From the elementary school onward, education was 'infused' with 'imperial nationalism', students received lessons intended to encourage 'patriotism, good citizenship and moral training' (McClelland & Rose, 2006, p286). Barnett argues that state education became inculcated with the principles of the 'Arnoldian public school and Newmanian Oxbridge' at teaching training level (Barnett, 1987, p223). The public schools and Oxford and Cambridge universities were universally accepted as the 'custodians and transmitters' of the national imperial culture (McCulloch, 1991, p16). 'Empire lore' was passed through the British education system for decades and eventually 'permeated the whole of society' (Porter, 2004, p62). Throughout an imperial past and a neoliberal present, Britain had set in motion the globalisation processes of which it was 'both an agent and recipient' (Martell, 2008, p464).

Britain's higher education institutions experienced many political masters and numerous policy changes during the period but by 1989 the 'pass the parcel' years appeared to be over (Collini, 2011, p10).

Government made it abundantly clear that if higher education expected public funding it must play a 'vital role' in stabilising the country's economic position (St. George, 2006, p593). Collini argues that higher education spending can only be justified to the electorate in terms of the 'benefits' gained from medical and technological research or in the production of experts (Collini, 2003, p7). Most of the world's industrial countries were acquiring a new respect for 'expertise' that was considered a distillation of the 'knowledge, research, and innovation' culture of higher education (Välimaa & Hoffman, 2008, p265).

The start of the last decade of the twentieth century marked the recognition that 'knowledge' was 'central to survival and success' (Brennan, 2008, pp382). This rise of the 'knowledge society' was a concept that brought a 'different understanding of the purpose of higher education and research' (Bleiklie, 2005, p54). Greater kudos was attached to 'educational credentials', not just as an indicator of 'social status' but also as an aid to 'positional advantage' (Brennan, 2008, p383). Higher education was the foundation on which the 'global knowledge economies' were built and higher education institutions became the key to the development of information technology and knowledge production (Välimaa & Hoffman, 2008, p266). An educational qualification in an internationally crowded workplace not only improved the 'lifetime opportunities' of the individual (Marginson, 2006, p3), but a highly educated nation was more likely to live in an economically successful country (Brennan, 2008, p383).

Many of the technological and engineering advances that brought about the 'great transformations' of the industrial revolution were not specifically studied in universities until the late nineteenth century (Rothblatt, 2000, p5). Thus the prospect of a major contribution to the national economy from higher education was seen as 'new system for creating wealth' (St. George, 2006, p590). Knowledge based industries favour the problem-solving skills of graduates who have experienced some specialist training within a 'broad' spectrum of study (Mackney, 2006, p4).

The 'special mission' of the 'education business' (Morey, 2004, p147) was to produce graduates with the ‘flexibility’ to cope with ‘rapidly changing situations’ (St. George, 2006, p592). To fulfil this requirement, many universities encouraged cultural, corporate and industrial diversity, they ‘blurred’ teaching boundaries to encompass ‘multi-campus international universities’, ‘virtual universities’ and ‘university-industry partnerships’; they created new networks that reached out nationally and ‘globally’ (Blight et al, 2000, p112).

The concept of a knowledge society seems to echo Cardinal Newman’s statement that education should be seen as a ‘preparation for knowledge’ (Newman, 1886, p144). Certainly the requirement of twenty first century employers for ‘creative, independent’ graduates who have ‘broadly based skills that can be used as a basis for specific job skills training’ (St. George, 2006, p592) is reminiscent of both Newman and Arnold’s view that non-vocational study produced graduates with skills applicable to a ‘wide range of jobs’ (Anderson, 2010). Lowe argues that while Britain’s higher education system has been hugely transformed it still bears the ‘marks of its Victorian origins’ being unable to entirely throw off its ‘social... hierarchical... even elitist structure’ (Lowe, 2005, p281).

Globalisation has encouraged international progress in the areas of science, medicine and communications; it has required ‘a new global economy’ and the redrafting of international law and the ‘development of regional and global governance structures’ (Held, 2002, p2). The 1648 treaty of Westphalia advanced the European notion of the ‘state’ but the ‘linkage’ between the state and its population as a ‘nation’ was not established until 1789 and the declarations of the French Revolution (Armstrong, 1998, p467). A ‘new age of political order’ was created to accommodate the view of a population as both nation and state (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p57). The concept of the nation-state within the framework of ‘Western thought’ has for two centuries been ‘exported throughout the world’ (Osterhammel & Petersson, 2005, p28). It was to become the colonial formula imposed and administered by Britain's 'classically trained administrative elite' (Weir & Beetham, 1999, p35). By the mid-twentieth century the free market ideals and ‘laissez-faire convictions’ of these liberally educated civil servants were to be recast as ‘neoliberalism’ (Scholte, 2005, p38). It was a ‘political economic doctrine’ that gained support because it was opposed to autarkic governmental intervention (Harvey, 2003, p157).

Historically, the commercial and cultural activities of Britain and its colonies ‘promoted’ globalisation (Ferguson, 2003, pxxiv). The universities were at the same time ‘facilitating globalisation’ through their international dissemination of Western ideals and the eventual creation of an overseas, but British-styled, ‘business and governmental elite’ (Dodds, 2008, p513). More recently universities have adapted and adopted ‘industry-based models of management’ (Dodds, 2008, p514) which in conjunction with the requirements of global knowledge economies have opened up a ‘world-wide positional market of elite universities’ (Marginson, 2006, p1). The resulting international blend of ‘competition, privatisation and promotion’ has contributed to a ‘globalising academic arms race' (Brennan 2008, p386) that has transformed some higher profile universities into ‘truly global operations’ (Morey, 2004, p131). Through such activities some key higher education institutions have influenced international outcomes to the extent that they have been identified as ‘engines of globalisation’ (Dodds, 2008, p513; Smeby & Trondal 2003, p4).

Globalisation and the English universities have advanced in a loose confederation that started with those graduates who accepted the concept of ‘privileged service’ (Morris, 1979, p23) and introduced the far-flung outposts of empire to the Oxbridge ideals of fair play, ‘balance and detachment’ (Barnett, 1987, p221). English universities have since ‘undergone some dramatic shifts’, most significantly the steady transformation ‘from an elite, mainly private system to an open, public system of mass education’ (Morey, 2004, p147). The increasing appreciation of ‘innovation’ and ‘expertise’ is transforming the ‘social role of universities in the globalized world’ (Välimaa & Hoffman, 2008, p265). ’Schools, and universities’ have played a significant role in ‘developing and disseminating’ neoliberal globalisation (Mittelman, 2003, p49); however, the globalising world is still identifiably the ‘product of Britain's age of Empire’ (Ferguson, 2003, pxxviii).

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